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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 26 *Summer, 1957* NUMBER 3

Political Compromise in France and America

PHILIP WILLIAMS

THE TRADITION OF FRANCO-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP is an old one. Since the days of Lafayette the two countries have more than once fought on the same side, never against each other. In both, democracy is firmly rooted, and it is the purpose of this article to suggest that, despite appearances, the French political system has much in common with that of the United States. Yet the friendly sympathy of most educated Americans for the French rarely extends to their politics.

The last issue of this journal contains a good illustration. Professor Joseph E. Baker concludes his urbane and sympathetic reflections on French views of the United States with some familiar —and some less familiar—strictures on the French system of government. Many of these display the confident misunderstanding not unusual among literary and scientific scholars in their forays into the political field. He suggests that in France "a politician may be made premier because his party *lost* the election"; this can be supported by a solitary incident in 1946, when Léon Blum (grand old man of the Republic as well as elder statesman of the unsuccessful Socialists) formed a one-month stopgap administration while the shattered former coalition was patched up again. Professor Baker complains that Edgar Faure could stay in power in 1955 only because he had been so heavily defeated; his readers would have been less bewildered and more enlightened if he had added that the "power" Faure retained was that of a caretaker premier presiding over the election precipitated by his defeat.

As visiting professor from Oxford University PHILIP WILLIAMS has been teaching in the department of public law and government at Columbia University for the past year. He is the author of *Politics in Post-war France*.

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Hardly has Professor Baker finished expressing his shock at the French for not turning their defeated leaders out of office promptly enough, than he is praising the American system for enabling President Eisenhower to retain power after losing the congressional election of 1954. No special French training is needed to find this position rather lacking in logic. But to the European observer the inconsistency exposes an illuminating truth: that American criticisms of French politics often echo the misunderstandings of United States institutions which prevail across the Atlantic. There it is widely considered a disadvantage that the legislature should often be controlled by the political opponents of the Chief Executive; and even the most benevolent attitude is one of admiration at the responsibility and restraint which enable American politicians to work—most of the time—a system so clearly, in European eyes, destined to deadlock. More frequently the ocean mist distorts the view, especially since the least responsible and sympathetic spokesmen are often, on both sides of the Atlantic, considered the most newsworthy. Consequently most Europeans, even well-informed and friendly ones, look on Congress very much as most Americans view the French National Assembly—as a chaotic, incoherent aggregation of small-minded and shortsighted individualists, whose incomprehensible behavior is predictable only in that, on matters of international concern, they so often seem "like inverted Micawbers waiting for something to turn down." That both caricatures are grotesquely unjust is beside the point. To the transatlantic onlooker the difficulties of an American administration in getting its policies (or even its budget) accepted loom almost as large as the instability of French governments in American eyes; and the politics of France and the United States often seem to bear more resemblance to each other than either shows to the British system of unchallenged executive predominance. Much admiration is lavished on the latter, not least at home; but English critics, smugly aware that their own government escapes many weaknesses which afflict the other two systems, often fail to appreciate that it lacks some of their advantages too.

I shall argue that there are some fundamental likenesses between the French and American situations that are perhaps—at least in comparison with the British—more significant than the

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obvious contrast. This discussion is confined to political institutions; but the behavior of men in politics depends greatly upon the social structure in which they act. In many ways France and the United States are very different societies; but in one crucial respect they are alike. Both are diversified countries, historically or geographically or ethnically too divided to give birth to two tightly disciplined parties, and deeply suspicious of great concentrations of executive power. In France these divisions give rise to several distinct parties; in the United States to two large ones, each of which contains many factions. In both, alliances are renewed at election times but rarely last long afterward; meanwhile legislative majorities are made and unmade by deals and compromises. Both in form and in substance, therefore, French and American parliamentary behavior have much in common. Even the French parties, different as they are from the American, show occasional similarities of outlook and function. For though politics in France is often considered as a kind of ideological Donnybrook Fair, this does both too much and too little justice to the practitioners. Root-and-branch enemies of the system apart, the French parliamentarian, like the American, rises to leadership, not through principled intransigence, but because he is adept at the arts of bargaining and brokerage. Of course, the shifting coalitions in the National Assembly, unlike those in Congress, immediately affect the executive branch; yet even here there is more continuity in France than is generally realized elsewhere.

It has become fashionable for Americans, seeking to explain the mysteries of their politics to uncomprehending foreigners, to use John C. Calhoun's concept of the concurrent majority as a guiding clue.[1] Every important group—farmers, labor, business and many smaller ones—has an effective veto on action which would seriously contravene its interests. But this veto, it is claimed, must not be used irresponsibly, must be suspended in time of emergency, and must for positive purposes be supplemented by parliamentary horse-trading and logrolling. This perpetual negotiating, conciliating and adjusting activity takes place at elections, in the selection of political leadership, and in the legislative process.

[1] I shall take John Fischer's article in *Harper's Magazine*, November, 1948, as a lucid and comprehensive exposition of this point of view.

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It is contrasted—by both Mr. Fischer and Professor Baker, for example—with the presumed ideological passions of the French; and of course it is true that political extremists are more numerous and more violent in France than in this country. Yet the groups which work within the French system, and are almost lost to sight by these critics, are for all practical purposes far more important than the extremists; and they often behave surprisingly like American politicians.

In the United States a political ticket must represent all parts of the constituency and all important racial or religious groups within it. Similarly, a French party list should be balanced between localities, occupations and (in areas like Alsace) religious denominations. An American presidential aspirant is normally acceptable only if he has not offended any major interest. In exactly the same way, French deputies will (except in an emergency) elect to the premiership the most "available" leader—namely, the one with most friends and fewest enemies. The United States Senate, as William S. White insists, is a club whose members feel a strong community spirit; so is the French Assembly, except for its Communist members (Poujadists no longer seem outside the fraternity). Professor Baker rightly remarks that Mendès-France's popularity in the country did not endear him to the deputies (though he fails to notice that it did win their votes for some drastic and disagreeable policy decisions). But does a President of the United States earn much credit among the Senators when he appeals over their heads to the people?

The concurrent majority principle operates in France no less than here. Just as important legislation cannot pass Congress without widespread bipartisan support, so a major bill can go through the French Assembly only with the backing of most of the moderate parties, for the opponents of the parliamentary system often command a third of the seats and generally oppose all governmental policies. The ordinary day-to-day interests of their adherents naturally suffer from this intransigence; if labor, for instance, has often been neglected in postwar France, this is because the industrial workers in effect disfranchise themselves by voting for a party hostile to the regime. But all interests willing to work within the system can exercise effective influence.

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French parliamentary committees, like those in Congress, exist to allow these interests to express their views and to enable the process of legislative compromise to work smoothly. In both countries the committees, and not the administration as in Britain, have the main say in determining whether and in what form bills shall pass into law. But the French system avoids certain disadvantages of the American. The fate of a bill in France is unlikely to be predetermined by the choice of committee to which it is assigned, for any other interested committee may express an advisory view. The investigating powers of French committees are too weak for serious use—or abuse. Their chairmen enjoy much less arbitrary power than their American counterparts; nor do the deputies feel irresistibly bound to select elderly colleagues from the regions least responsive to any shift in the outlook of the national electorate. (However, the extra political weight bestowed on rural and remote parts of the United States by the seniority rule and the composition of the Senate does find some equivalent in the similar overrepresentation of the countryside in the much weaker French second chamber.) Even without a seniority rule, committee chairs in France are filled by men of political eminence and technical competence, who usually retain their posts for years at a time. Thus despite the supposed ideological intransigence of the French politician, the present Socialist chairman of the Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee was first elected in a Conservative house, while the Conservative chairman of the Finance Committee has kept his place in the predominantly left-wing chamber of 1956. No French committee would limit its choice to local alternatives as grisly as those facing the Judiciary Committee of the United States Senate: a North Dakota Republican who doubts the reliability of the Chief Justice, or a Mississippi Democrat who suspects the entire Court of Communist sympathies.

Neither in France nor in the United States is every political controversy automatically absorbed in and its issue determined by the single combat between the major parties. In neither does the administration, as in Britain, not merely decide the fate of legislation but introduce all important bills itself. (British private members may not propose expenditure, and among their few puny legislative proposals almost as many are concerned with animal as with

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human welfare.) In neither France nor America, therefore, is the rank-and-file parliamentary supporter of an administration party reduced to frustrated impotence as in the House of Commons (significantly, the circumlocutory phrase is needed because neither French nor American politics has a word for "backbencher"). In neither does a politician's career and standing normally depend, as in Britain, exclusively on his status with his national party leaders; on the contrary, in Congress or the National Assembly, skill in committee negotiation and personal acceptability to colleagues of differing views are more important than the qualities of aggressive agility which earn advancement in the British parliamentary jousting ring. For in both the United States and France, the legislature remains an agency for policy decision where, consequently, members seek to persuade their colleagues; in Britain it has become a forum for propagandist appeals to the electorate for or against policies which the majority will automatically ratify. This does not mean that British politics are all conflict and no compromise; it does mean that the bargains are struck in private, in the cabinet room, the party meeting, or the Whitehall conference between civil servants and pressure groups. But in France (even more than in America) major decisions appear in the open, in electoral pacts and in the legislature.

One of the main objects of political bargaining in any country is the national budget. In Britain the government draws it up and it passes into law with only such concessions to criticism as the cabinet chooses to accept. But in Congress, it has recently been remarked, the Representatives "patiently trim the budget here and there and then the Senate patiently pads it out again so that it is about where the President wants it."[2] A similar process occurs in France, though there (where there is no federal system and almost all public spending is borne on the national budget) it is the house closer to the voters which usually increases expenditure and the one more removed from them which makes the cuts. In France, as in the United States, the appropriations committees often find themselves resisting the costly demands of their free-spending colleagues. Nor is the comparison merely between institutional forms; behind these lies a more important political reality. The American

[2] *New York Times*, March 9, 1957

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congressman is a constituency ambassador before he is a party man; the British M.P. is the reverse; and the French deputy is much closer to his transatlantic confrere than to his opposite number across the Channel.

Though there is no locality rule in France, half the members of the Assembly were born in the constituency they represent.[3] The localism so prominent in both French and American politics is extraordinarily absent from the British scene. Reflecting the greater diversity (both historical and geographical) of the two republics, this localism at once prevents their developing two disciplined parties, and thrives on the absence of such organizations. The well-known remark that the United States has not two parties but ninety-eight, two federal and two for each state, is a picturesque exaggeration—like too many similar comments made seriously about the French political scene, where only half a dozen parties are significant. The compromises between factions, renegotiated every four years at American conventions, are matched by the alliances made between separate parties at every French election—and are, it seems, about as lasting. A French coalition, like an American party, holds together long enough to organize the legislature, but breaks up into its heterogeneous elements once that job is done. For such diversified countries cannot be expected to produce political combinations sufficiently homogeneous to maintain unity and discipline for any length of time.

In both countries democratic parties seek to assimilate new political forces to the existing body politic. M.R.P., for instance, has gone far to reconcile devout Catholics to the Republic which they once so bitterly opposed. The Socialists have indeed had less success in winning the working class to a "party of government" (i.e., of compromise); but their party is no less democratic in outlook (and more so in internal organization) than either American party, or either British one for that matter. It has many impassioned ideologues in the lower ranks, but also many—some think too many—political bosses and practical administrators at the top.

The Radical party and the American Democrats, historically at least, bear a singular resemblance. Appealing mainly to provin-

[3] At present France contains 103 constituencies, roughly the size of congressional districts but each represented, under a partly proportional system, by several deputies.

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cial distrust of Paris and to the small man's suspicion of the "special interests," the Radicals have long included the most diverse elements: northern New Dealers led by Mendès-France; southern colonial diehards and red-baiters like Martinaud-Déplat; prominent businessmen like René Mayer; old hands like Queuille, more interested in party unity and electoral success than in policy; practical politicians like Edgar Faure, forever compromising their own liberal views for the sake of immediate effectiveness. In 1955, the first of these groups captured the party machine and tried to reconstitute the old loose party as a unified body with a clear-cut program distinct from that of their rivals, a program which they would forward by means of disciplined organization, to which their members would be pledged, and for which alone they would co-operate with other parties. Mendès-France and his friends have found in the Radical parliamentary group about as warm a welcome as the Democratic Advisory Council has had from the party's leadership in Congress.

Relations between France's four main democratic groups show at least as much consensus as do those between the two American parties. On many matters, especially in foreign policy, the French Socialist and Conservative can agree more often and more easily than the liberal Democrat and the rock-ribbed Republican. In the economic field, coalition politics, no less than the two-party system, force the former to modify their program and the latter to move with the times. French Socialists, though they have introduced more public ownership than American New Dealers, have never (partly because of the Communist problem) gone so far in putting governmental influence squarely behind the labor unions. And in the public presentation of their differences, French democratic politicians use rarely, if ever, the kind of wild accusation hurled in the more rugged American campaigns, from charges of Communist associations to slogans about "Democratic wars."

Nor indeed should every "extreme party" necessarily be dismissed as an enemy of democracy. The Gaullists, for example, were in many ways the Bull Moose Progressives of France. A former national leader emerged from a brief retirement to inspire a movement which drew its active supporters largely from professional men, anxious for reform, efficiency and clean government, but dis-

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gusted with ordinary politics.[4] Emotional nationalism, impatience with the power of pressure groups, and a demand for strong leadership were more conspicuous than the specific proposals put forward. A startling initial success could not be followed up within the existing political framework, and the practical politicians who had jumped on the bandwagon were soon lured off it by the traditional conservatives. Of course, General de Gaulle attracted many followers far more hostile to "the system" than Theodore Roosevelt's supporters; yet most of them were exasperated by its weaknesses rather than bent upon its destruction. In winning over such malcontents the Gaullists were performing a function not unlike that of an American third party; as they rightly claimed, their success was to be measured not by their own accession to power but by their impact on the policies of those who held it. There were also true antiparliamentary extremists in the R.P.F.: the movement's effect on them illustrates how both systems frustrate and minimize the influence of political wild men when they enter the democratic struggle for power. In the United States, Mr. Fischer claims, the fanatics can never get to first base. In France they can; but they can go no farther. In other words, the extremists win substantial parliamentary representation—far more than here—but can rarely, if ever, translate it into a share of governmental authority. The more numerous and aggressive they become, the greater the cohesion of the moderate parties, from Socialists to Conservatives, and the stronger their determination to keep the common enemy out.

The R.P.F. sought first and foremost to reinforce the powers of government. But some other rebels against traditional politics, in both countries, seem to demand anarchy at the center and a strong hand at the extremities. Such movements find it harder to enter the legislature in force in the United States than they do in France, but easier to win an executive foothold. The Poujadists were, in 1956, five times as strong proportionately as the Dixiecrats in 1948, yet had no opportunity under the French system to dominate the administration of a region—or even to control a modest domain, like Huey Long or J. Bracken Lee. For the two-party system sometimes assists instead of frustrating the progress of the

[4] I owe this point of the analogy to an American authority on Gaullism, Nicholas Wahl of Harvard University.

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dangerous men. In his unscrupulous exploitation of a recent *cause célèbre* to charge his political opponents with espionage and treason, Maître Tixier-Vignancour was unpleasantly reminiscent of Senator McCarthy; but the former owed his brief opportunity for mischief-making to the complaisance of a judge, and would never have been elevated to a place of authority by the free choice of a political assembly.

The leaders of antiparliamentary movements must, if they seek to obtain office or influence policy, make terms with the democrats as the Gaullists did. The extremists are thus frustrated by buying off their leaders: a method with drawbacks (for the exasperated rank and file may turn to still more irresponsible courses), but a highly effective one. Of all these movements, only the Communists have resisted for long the absorptive power of the parliamentary system. Enemies of democracy on the Right have never contrived at once to attain parliamentary influence and to preserve doctrinal purity. Five years ago these forces thought for a moment that they could exploit the success of a popular newcomer to the political front rank, M. Pinay. But that respectable and moderate leader has been compelled by the exigencies of parliamentary compromise and governmental responsibility to move so far in domestic, foreign and especially North African policy that today he and his Conservative colleagues are regarded by their former admirers on the extreme Right as the worst of traitors.

Both systems, then, put a useful premium on political moderation and compromise, the American proving usually but not necessarily rather more effective in this than the French. On the other side, Mr. Fischer concedes four major faults in American government: the obstacles to speedy action when so many interests wield a veto; the inordinate power of quite minor pressure groups; the handicap imposed on strong and forceful potential leaders; and the absence of any legislative spokesman for the national as against sectional interests. Precisely these charges are, of course, constantly and legitimately leveled at the French regime. But whereas the United States provides a potent corrective in the twentieth-century presidency, France suffers in addition from a further vice, the most familiar of all, governmental instability.

This is a contrast which cannot simply be explained away; yet

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it is less absolute than it at first appears. For if the test be continuity of executive personnel and policy, France's frequent cabinet changes give an impression worse than the reality justifies; and if it be the authority of the national leadership to win acceptance for its policies, then America's separation of powers provides a built-in instability of its own. Congress, especially but not only when controlled by the opposition, is tempted to flout the wishes of an administration which it has not created and cannot control; and the means used by the President to assert his authority are not very different from those employed by a French government in a difficult house.

Neither in administrative nor in political terms is a change of ministry in France equivalent to the same event in Britain or the United States. There are far fewer replacements in the administrative hierachy than occur when a President is elected (or even reelected: witness the massacre of ambassadors in 1957). A cabinet change rarely involves the ouster of all or even most of the ministers. It may be limited to the disappearance of one or two men whose credit has been exhausted or whose policies have broken down. Thus cabinets change far more frequently than the members who compose them. One "crisis," in 1951, consisted only in the demotion of the prime minister to a vice-premiership, the appointment of a senior colleague in his stead, and the replacement of another who was gravely ill. In the ten years after liberation, with the exception of one month, France had only two foreign ministers while the United States had six secretaries of state—though lately America's quantitative record has improved.

Politically, most French cabinet changes are thus like, though usually less significant than, the replacement of Sir Anthony Eden by Mr. Macmillan; very few are like the change from a Conservative to a Labor government. In the nineteen "crises" of the Fourth Republic, ten of the retiring premiers joined the new cabinet and thirteen of the successors were drawn from the previous ministry. But in the middle of their lives French Assemblies do sometimes undergo a real shift of orientation. In the Third Republic, chambers elected with a Left majority often ended with a rather conservative government because some center groups changed sides; conversely the right-wing Assembly of 1951 chose Mendès-France

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as premier in 1954 and Faure in 1955, and started Tunisia and Morocco on the road to independence. Such evolutions take account of the movements in public opinion which here find expression in mid-term elections. The French method involves more executive discontinuity, but less danger of deadlock between government and legislature, and longer respites between electoral campaigns.

Cabinet weakness is indeed a far more serious fault of French government than cabinet instability; if (as many wish) the Assembly could be compelled to accept a single ministry for the duration of its own life, it would probably choose the most colorless politician available to preside over day-to-day administration for five years. There is little point in having long ministries unless they are also strong ones. But in forcing very controversial policies through the legislature, American as well as French governments face great difficulties; and only once in recent years in either country have major social changes been made by legislation (1933-37 in the United States, 1945-46 in France). In both countries the executive possesses somewhat similar resources for overcoming parliamentary opposition; among them constituency favors and patronage are of rather greater importance here, party pressure counts for a little more in France. But in both countries the government is likely to get its way only when a sense of crisis prevails.

Mr. Fischer points out that the American President's chance of carrying his policies depends on the interests refraining from using their vetoes; and that they can be persuaded to do this only in an emergency. Consequently, he maintains that the Chief Executive finds it necessary to keep public tension at an undesirably high pitch by discovering repeated crises—for example, that over Greco-Turkish aid in 1947. The French Assembly, like Congress, accepts at crucial periods—during the 1947 strikes or the administration of Mendès-France—strong governmental action which normally it would reject. And there, too, if an emergency does not exist, it can sometimes be invented. During their early honeymoon weeks, French ministries usually secure from the deputies authority to issue sweeping decrees, subject to later parliamentary ratification, on the urgent problems of the moment—a procedure which by-

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passes the numerous traps and hazards lurking in the path of the ordinary legislative measure.

Normally, however, the deputy sees it as his essential function to keep an eye on the ministers. His attitude may not be very different from that of a congressional committee member grilling one of his less favorite cabinet officers; but the Frenchman's means of action are both more polite and more effective. A minister who loses the confidence of Parliament can easily be removed; this vulnerability may cause either more changes of minister or better consultation on policy. In administration, the American President checks the career bureaucracy by party appointments at the top of the agencies of government. The French politician brings into office with him a small personal secretariat (*cabinet*) drawn from his party, family, friends or civil service sympathizers; like similar groups of cronies elsewhere, this is sometimes a source of corruption. At the other end of the political scale, the French citizen suspects the deputy of betraying his interests to the powers that be—though to judge by the frequency with which he requires his representative to submit to re-election, the American voter is two and a half times more mistrustful than the French.

Yet, though far more Frenchmen than Americans use their vote at election time, and though it appears that many an American mother did not rear her boy to be a congressman, when all is said and done the French system gives less satisfaction than the American. There are both more political extremists and more discontented democrats in France than in the United States. The latter are disgruntled because of the weakness of a regime which cannot be strengthened for fear of the dangerous men. But the true extremists themselves—many fewer than the voters who support their parties—are in revolt for more fundamental causes.

The French economy has made spectacular strides in the last three years, surpassing her neighbors and even the United States; but this has only just begun to compensate for the poor performance of generations.[5] Resentment at the decline of France's interna-

[5] The immediate political effects may even be adverse, as in Poujadism—the revolt of marginal shopkeepers and farmers against economic progress, and thus an unhealthy symptom of a healthy trend. In *Le Mouvement Poujade* (p. 254 n.) Professor Stanley Hoffmann has commented on the likeness of its mentality and mythology to the aspects of American Populism portrayed by Professor Richard Hofstadter.

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tional position and determination to check this process are fed by the feeling that her friends have sometimes failed when help was needed—as in the 1930's (to take a safely remote example), when Congress enacted "neutralist" legislation and Chamberlain became Prime Minister of Britain. A minority of French reactionaries never accepted democracy; and when they found in the shadow of Nazi occupation an opportunity which they could never have won for themselves, they inflicted wounds whose scars will take more than a dozen years to heal. Thus the Second World War, while it posed the problem of governmental weakness even more urgently than before, at the same time made it harder to solve. It exacerbated the divisions and suspicions among Frenchmen, and so revived all their historic fears of a powerful government which might fall into the wrong hands. American politicians did not risk entrusting the executive power to a strong President during the thirty-five years which followed the Civil War.

This is the immediate answer to the obvious question which the argument of this article evokes: If the problems are so similar in the two countries, why is the same solution not acceptable? Presidential government has had distinguished advocates in France, yet has been shunned for a century by practicing politicians, for more permanent obstacles lie deeply embedded in the social structure, administrative traditions and political history of the country.

First, there is no effective driving force in France demanding a strong executive, whether of the British or American type. The industrial working class, the interest which normally expects most benefits from state action, is numerically and organizationally much weaker than in the other two great democracies, and its political weight is further reduced by its preference for the Communist party. And the groups normally most afraid of "Big Government" and high taxes, the small businessmen and farmers, are more numerous and politically more highly regarded in France than in any other major country.

Second, French rulers have always insisted on maintaining an extremely centralized, bureaucratic and pervasive administrative structure. Federalism is too risky a device for a country in which dangerous enemies of the regime might exploit it. Consequently, France's "state's righters"—provincials who suspect dangerous go-

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ings-on in the national capital—are protected by no autonomous institutions capable of interposing obstacles to the action of the central government. (This is why, for instance, Frenchmen take it for granted that Mississippi could not treat its Negroes as it chooses if the majority of Americans, or their Administration, seriously disapproved.) But without such local defenses, the wary provincial is the more inclined to insist on checks and balances at the center—achieved in France by subordinating the government to a parliament which, it is reasonably assumed, will be too divided to be capable of oppression. Many of these recalcitrants indeed make doubly sure by voting for the extreme opponents of the regime as a further guarantee of keeping it weak. The peasant Communists of southern France are seeking to hamper, not to reinforce political authority; and though Pierre Poujade, alas, was never head of French tax administration, he has something in common with T. Coleman Andrews, nonetheless.

The third and historical obstacle derives in general from the fear that strong governments will abuse their power, and in particular from France's previous experience of a presidential constitution, in the Second Republic, when President Louis Bonaparte exploited his position and popularity to make himself Emperor. All subsequent leaders who have sought a personal plebiscitary following instead of a parliamentary majority have been accused (often justly) of similar ambitions. These fears may be out of date but they are still widely felt. If a presidential system ever were adopted they might result in eliminating any strong-minded and "dangerous" candidate, and limiting the field to colorless and "available" men like the German moderates who ran against Hindenburg in 1925.

Thus a vicious circle has developed. Politicians and voters, by denying to government powers which it might abuse, have made it sometimes hard for the executive to act at all. Consequently the extremist parties can recruit support not only from the tiny minorities of ideological fanatics and from the groups hostile to any political authority, but also among disgruntled democrats whose problems are not being met within the present regime or by the moderate parties. A poll taken in 1952 asked voters to say whether they preferred progress by means of reform or of revolution: 50 per cent

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of Communists and 85 per cent of Gaullists chose the former alternative. Yet by swelling the extremist ranks such discontented citizens keep alive the fears of the democratic groups, and so discourage that reinforcement of the executive without which effective reformist politics are impossible.

These weaknesses are certainly serious; but they too often lead to an underestimate of the strength of the Republic, which since 1875 has survived so many pessimistic predictions and so many autocratic regimes. In 1898, an acute and excellently informed British critic, J. E. C. Bodley, wrote two substantial volumes to show that France was utterly incapable of democracy and would revert to military dictatorship at the slightest disturbance. The Dreyfus affair and the syndicalist outburst provided immediate and resounding disproof; and in the crisis of the First World War, France, like England, reasserted civilian control where Germany abandoned it. Ever since Bodley wrote, French elections have been regular, fair and free; the proportion voting is almost equal to the British (more in 1956 than Britain's in 1955); and no one questions the verdict of the polls. Unpopular minorities are protected by the courts, and normally by a vigilant and liberal public opinion, against the abuse of power by political authority. In short, France, like the United States and Britain—and unlike Germany and Italy—is a country where democracy has sunk roots which are today deeper than sixty or twenty years ago. Her turbulent history makes her citizens, unlike Britons and even more than Americans, determined to keep their rulers under severe restraint, for Frenchmen believe with George Washington that "government, like fire, is a dangerous servant and a fearful master." A long lag in economic development, military vulnerability, and international decline have brought in France more deep-seated and lasting discontent with the system than the other great democracies have to face. Yet the similarities of outlook and of behavior should command more sympathy and understanding in the United States for the difficulties of French politicians, and in France for those of America's leaders, than either country usually displays toward its transatlantic fellow democracy.

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Joseph and His Brothers

A Comedy in Four Parts

MARK VAN DOREN

TO SAY THAT MANN'S *Joseph and His Brothers* is primarily a comic work is to say no more than the author himself said in his foreword to the new edition of 1948. He called it then "a humorous song of mankind," an "epic undertaking" in the spirit of Goethe rather than of Wagner, a narrative written "playfully," with many "pleasantries" in it which he hoped would "cheer those who come after us," though with "pathos" in it, too, which at some later time might still be touching. He spoke of it, that is to say, as a comic poem of vast proportions. And so it is. Its "seventy thousand calmly flowing lines"—someone else might say its twelve hundred continuously intelligent pages—make up a modern masterpiece with which there are few things to be compared, though Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* is surely one of those. That equally vast work depends equally with *Joseph and His Brothers* upon our sense of time; or, if you prefer, upon our sense of eternity; or, if you insist, upon our sense of the present moment. For when we have succeeded in giving ourselves to the present moment we are as near to eternity as we shall ever get. Eternity is not a lot of time; it is no time at all, and so is this moment that passes before we know it has come—except that we do know some moments when they come, and it is these and only these from which we learn.

The comic genius loves to speculate about such matters. It has not always done so as explicitly as in the two outstanding cases of Proust and Mann; but then ours is an explicit age which struggles

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to be conscious of everything, so that we are not surprised when Mann discusses at length a number of things that Chaucer, say, could take for granted. The comic genius has never been more alive than it was in Chaucer, but it does not appear that he thought he needed a theory of time, or at any rate a statable one which in effect would constitute his subject matter. Neither, of course, does Mann think simply that; his subject matter after all is never anything but Joseph and his father and his brothers, and the wonderful world of Egypt where he spent his most brilliant years, just as in *The Magic Mountain,* Mann's other masterpiece which deals with time, the subject matter is whatever the persons of the story talk about when their excellent brains catch fire in the cold solitude of an Alpine sanatarium. Yet it is true that Mann must think out loud as he writes, and what he thinks about is the bottomless well of time which threatens, if looked into deeply enough, to obscure every individual character and countenance—even those of Joseph himself—and to silence every event so that we who come long after may have doubts that it occurred, or in any case that it made much noise in the universe it could not manage at the end to alter. The famous prelude to the work, called "Descent into Hell," might have been called instead "Descent into Time." The genius of story can never dispense with time, but the genius of comic story stands in a peculiar relation to that commodity. It both believes in it and it does not. Tragedy believes furiously, even obsessively, in time; time always presses there, leaving the hero unfree to act in the wise way he might if he had the leisure. Comedy, on the other hand, relaxes and disperses time, spreads it out or draws it thin so that it looks a little like eternity. It is not eternity, and it cannot ever be; but enough of it will establish the perspective that comedy likes and indeed must have. Only, given the maximum perspective, movement comes to a stop and men are reduced to resembling one another so closely, even so absurdly, that merely man is left, or, to put it abstractly, human nature.

Perhaps it was human nature that Mann lived with during the sixteen dreadful years, between 1926 and 1942, when he was composing *Joseph and His Brothers.* One could also say that he lived with Joseph, the individual upon whose image he had settled. But

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the image enlarged while he studied it, as did the image of every other person in the tale, so that at last he had before him something like the whole spectacle which human life provides when nothing operates to distort it. In the Germany of these years it was outrageously distorted, and there were those who said it would never regain its ancient shape. Here, though, was that very shape; and Mann has testified to the satisfaction he derived from contemplating its breadth and depth. "It was my refuge, my comfort, my home," he says, "my symbol of steadfastness, the guarantee of my perseverance in the tempestuous change of things."

Yet he would have done substantially as he did in any case. Mann's genius was entirely comic; which is to say that it was contemplative, discursive, skeptical, tender, mocking and loving all at once. It was contemplative because it desired the oldest and the widest view of things, somewhat as they are, supposing man can know this, in their eternal aspect. It was discursive because man's mind is most at home in conversation, in endless talk that considers, measures, analogizes and compares. No reader of Mann needs to be told how irresistibly he was drawn to language, and how much pleasure he took in imitating the various dialects of thought. The comic genius is among other things a mimic; so in America, where Mann wrote the fourth section of his epic, it was natural for him not merely to see a parallel between Joseph the Provider and Roosevelt the prophet of abundance, but also to adopt so many idioms of the time and place as to incur the charge that he no longer wrote in German, though of course he did, to the enrichment of that none too lively language. *The Magic Mountain*, like any pure comedy, tends to be all conversation; and if this is not quite true of the Joseph books, it is nevertheless true that what its people say to one another, and what Mann says about them as he converses with his reader, can be understood as carrying most of the burden. Nor can one miss the fact that Joseph's own gift, his distinguishing art, is the wonderful way he has with words, so that he entrances all who come within the sound of his voice or—the same thing—the reach of his mind. When he read aloud to Potiphar, it was as if he were creating a new beauty in the text. The intellect of any person is perhaps most swiftly revealed by the way he reads a page he has never seen before.

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Potiphar knew the pages by heart, but never had they sounded like this. "Joseph read . . . capitally," we hear, "was fluent, exact, unaffected, moderately dramatic, with such natural command of words that the most involved literary style had a happy conversational ease. Literally he read himself into the heart of the listener; and when we seek to understand his swift rise in the Egyptian's favor we must by no means leave out of account these reading hours." He knew his way among intricate phrases as Hamlet, speaking to the players, knew his; no mind, no tongue, has ever been more nimble than that. But this was Hamlet in his comic aspect: his original aspect, which tragedy, as Ophelia divines, has already overwhelmed and lamentably deformed.

The genius of Mann is skeptical in the finest sense of an often misapprehended term. It was not that he believed nothing; he believed everything; he liked ideas, and could live with all of them at once. No sooner did one start up in his brain than another came to reinforce, illuminate or check it. This was why he could turn so soon from tenderness to pathos, and why he could mock the very man he loved the most. These transformations of his mood will bewilder anyone who does not comprehend how serious at last the comic spirit is. Nothing in man is more serious than his sense of humor; it is the sign that he wants all the truth, and sees more sides of it than can be soberly and systematically stated; it is the sign, furthermore, that he can remember one idea even while he entertains another, and that he can live with contradiction. It is the reason, at any rate, that we cannot take seriously one whose mind and heart have never been known to smile. The gods do not weep; they smile. Eternity is something like the sun.

The comic spirit has a perfect sense of time, as of a good comedian we say that he has perfect timing. The comic spirit knows that time both does and does not exist; it can look like sheer illusion, though the illusion is one in which comedy will luxuriously live. Comedy takes its time, as truth and history do. The good storyteller is never in a hurry, nor do we want him to be; his digressions, his elaborations, his hesitations, his gestures, are in the end more interesting than the action he unfolds; we do not, in fact, want him to reach the end, for then we shall no longer hear his voice or relish with him the way he looks at life, of which the story at hand is but

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one illustration. While it was being told it amply sufficed our hunger for understanding; it replaced all other stories, was, in effect, story itself, was poetry in the flesh. It treated of only a few people and things, and it treated them in some present moment which absorbed us so that we forgot the rest of time. Yet it had also something to do with the rest of time, which hung about it like a haze, beautifying and validating its apparently random, its artfully accidental details. "The form of timelessness," says Mann, "is the here and now." He can say this because he knows how to see Joseph and Jacob as men who lived both long ago and now. They lived so long ago that if time were altogether and simply real they would have no identity today; their figures, their faces, would be woefully indistinct, and the thoughts they had would be mere puffs of desert dust. But time is not that real; Joseph and Jacob can exist not only again but yet; because they existed so intensely in their moment they live always, in all moments. These things are forever happening. History, with a monotony that comedy loves rather than deplores, repeats itself ad infinitum. All thoughts, all things, all men, are simultaneously true, as somehow in God's mind they are. The mind of comedy is not that great, but it is the greatest possession of the one creature made in God's image—unless, as Mann playfully suggests, man was the maker of God: in the person of Abram was none other than His father. But in that case it would still be true that the greatest thing in man is his power to know and remember many things at once, to master time, to be in a word the receptacle of the comic spirit.

Any story that is worth telling can be told either briefly or at length. Ideally, these alternatives are absolute: the teller takes no time at all, or else he takes an infinite amount of it. Since neither of those miracles is possible, the narrative artist must be content with a choice between abridgment and amplitude. Mann certainly did not abridge the story of Joseph. His work is forty-five times as long as the section of Genesis which deals with the hero alone, and fifteen times as long as the section which covers in addition, as Mann himself does, the careers of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is amplitude indeed, and there have been those who wondered whether Mann did not achieve too much of it for any earthly purpose. The answer ought to be clear. His purpose was comic, and comedy takes its time.

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It insists upon leisure, of which it is confident that there cannot be too much. Also, it is addicted to talk, its own and others', and entertains itself with as much of that as the subject suggests, or as we shall listen to. The subject of Joseph suggested everything to Mann; nothing he knew or thought was alien to it, and no idea was irrelevant. So for sixteen years, with major and minor interruptions, he happily spun his web until it draped like a silken veil the whole figure of the world.

Even Genesis had lingered over the story as it did not in the cases of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There was something special about Joseph even then and there; he had nothing of the patriarch about him, and in after times his name dropped out of the Bible. God appeared to Moses as the God of three great men, not four. Joseph had saved the race in Egypt, but he was never to be honored as one of its founders. He was not simple enough for that. Neither in a sense was Jacob, yet Jacob's name lived on as one of the never to be forgotten three. Jacob for one thing did not become an Egyptian; he never became anything but what he was, so that when Joseph met him in the Land of Goshen there was a fantastic difference between the two figures: the younger one brilliant with linen and gold, the older one as plain as the wagon seat on which he had ridden all the way from Israel, through dust and among the remnant of his herds. It was not easy for the father to recognize his son in the splendid prince he saw step out of a chariot; nor, when the time came to talk, did he hesitate to say some things that may have sounded bitter to the young man whose mind was full of the glittering deeds he knew he had done. "God has . . . given you back, but yet not quite, for He has kept you too. . . . He has elevated and rejected you both in one, I say it in your ear, beloved child, and you are wise enough to be able to hear it. He has raised you above your brothers just as in your dream—but He has raised you in a worldly way, not in the sense of salvation and the inheritance of the blessing. . . . You are blessed, my dear one, . . . blessed with blitheness and with destiny, with wit and with dreams. Still, it is a worldly blessing, not a spiritual one. . . . Through you salvation is not to reach the peoples and the leadership is denied you. . . . You are not like the fathers, my child, for you are no spiritual prince, but a worldly one." This is Mann writing, not the author of Genesis, but

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it is what the whole Bible means in spite of its silence on the subject. The Bible is silent like the patriarchs; Mann, like Joseph, is eloquent as civilization and comedy are eloquent. He is even loquacious, for there is nothing he would rather do than put into words what simple men suppose cannot be said, or for that matter has no need to be said.

There can be no comedy about patriarchs. They come before civilization is in flower, and comedy is the finest of the flowers. They are the foundation, for the most part hidden from sight; it is the cornice, the gables and the roof. Or, to change the figure once again, they are the blood and it is the complexion. Mann's Joseph is all grace, all light, all intellect at its highest. He can do anything except be the silent, tremendous man each one of his ancestors was. In Egypt he remembers the faith of his fathers, and characteristically gives a lucid account of it whenever asked. But it is not a part of him; it is not in his bones as it is in the bones of Jacob. If anything, he understands it too perfectly; it is one of the works of art he knows like a connoisseur; it is outside of him, and he can leave it there when he likes. He leaves it there during his sundry flirtations with other faiths and other deities: Tammuz, Ashtaroth and Osiris. What Mann calls "the soul's love-affair with matter" fascinates him if anything too much. There was a youthful moment when he almost worshipped the Moon and subscribed to its cult. "As a cult," says Mann, "it was vague, confused, and prone to degenerate—calculated to alarm the careful father—but just on that ground intoxicating, because mental and physical emotions were therein so enchantingly mixed." Egypt, the Kingdom of the Dead and therefore the embodiment of all that Jacob had taught him to abhor, was not visited by Joseph voluntarily; Jacob's other sons, the red-eyed sons of Leah, sent him there; but once there he again became the connoisseur of customs, in this case exquisite ones which the artist in him could not but admire. He did no more than admire and master this new way of life; he remained faithful to his fathers, and said so often enough; yet none of his fathers could have done what he did —could have become more Egyptian than any son of Egypt, and worn its manners like so many jewels. It is impossible to imagine Isaac, for example, flattering, as Joseph did, the guide who was about to take him in to his first audience with Pharaoh. Isaac would

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never have been there in the first place; but supposing that he was, and supposing that the guide asked him whether he knew how to salute the god, it could never have occurred to him to smile and say: "I wish I did not, for it would be pleasant to learn it of you." This was flattery, and it was mockery too; it came from the top of Joseph's mind that touched the stars.

Joseph is material for comedy precisely because he is civilized. Both comedy and tragedy depend on civilization for their power. The stories of the patriarchs belong perhaps in neither category; they are too primitive, possibly they are too important, to be classified at all. They simply exist and tell themselves, as seeds germinate in the ground. The first fathers were, to be sure, the heroes of great stories; they were this side of God in whose life there are no events; but they were nowhere near as far away from absolute simplicity as Joseph was. Joseph was secular; he could believe anything and everything; he was advanced; he was free; and his only illusion was that he had none. He had several concerning himself, the chief of these being that there was no real difference between him and Jacob. Even at the end he was not too certain as to what the difference was that Jacob had tried his best to put into words. This supremely intelligent man did not, that is to say, know everything. And just there is the point at which he becomes available for comic treatment. The stupid person who knows nothing is of no interest to the comic spirit. The brilliant person who nevertheless is blind to something as visible as the ground before his feet—he is the one upon whom wit delights to sharpen its knives. And so with Joseph in Mann's case. Loving his hero as he loved himself, Mann still could mock him because he was not God. And in the same breath he could adore him. He lavished upon him all the understanding that he had, all the elaboration of which his wit was so abundantly capable. His marvelous reconstructions of the Egyptian court, intricate perhaps beyond any imagination but his, and ornate as only he could delicately achieve ornateness—witness for example the entrance of Nefertiti, "with swaying tread, faintly smiling, her eyes cast down, the long, lovely neck thrust anxiously out: the bearer of the seed of the sun"—still do not match the work he did inside Joseph's mind, where recess upon recess opens, as it were, into the very caverns of genius. And this work is endless; it fills a fearsome

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multitude of pages; nor was any of it done in Genesis. It is all Mann, all modern and all comedy.

Mann's method of amplification is simple in one sense: it is the method of filling in, of stuffing interstices with matter he thinks belongs there. The Biblical narrative is famously bald; it leaves almost everything to the imagination, after, of course, giving the imagination great work to do. Mann cannot be said to desire that nothing be left for his own reader to imagine; he too gives him work, and it can be a life's work if one chooses to do it; but the reader in this case has ideas to contemplate rather than actions to complete. And the ideas are Mann's. Claiming to know in full detail what the people of the ancient tale said to one another in this crisis or that, he supplies conversations which themselves are food for the soul, so delicate and deep they are. The colloquies between Jacob and his favorite son explore the entire field of filial and paternal feeling. What Pharaoh said to Joseph tells us more about Egypt than the archaeologists can. And what Potiphar's wife confessed to him in her third-year agony of love is the climax of a whole fine novel of which she has been the distinguished heroine—though in Mann's opinion Joseph has not been its distinguished hero. He gives us that opinion —it has to do with Joseph's vanity—just as he always lays bare for us the process of his own thought. We are continuously in his confidence; the book could, in fact, be described as a conversation between the author and the reader, or rather as a monologue which the reader is expected to overhear.

But the method is not so simple as all that. Sometimes it involves the addition of circumstances and deeds, the outright invention of narrative details, none of which we could have worked out for ourselves unless our talent and our scholarship had been identical with Mann's. And the richest number of these is to be found in the Potiphar section, which Mann himself called "the artistic zenith of the work." Potiphar's household becomes a fascinating world all by itself. The dwarves, the parents of the master, the eunuch master and his tragic wife—these are the central figures, and each one of them is a triumph of creation, yet they are surrounded by others still, in a busy and beautiful house which for the time being absorbs our entire attention. And none of this is in the Bible. Perhaps it did not need to be, but we do not think of that; and even if we did

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we would find nothing that contradicted or violated the primitive fable. It is simply that Mann has moved us up close enough for us to be able to see what happened in this household day by day—it may be minute by minute—during the three years it was a part of human history. There is the day, for instance, of the ladies' party, when Potiphar's wife, incapable any longer of bearing alone the crushing burden of her love for Joseph, invites her friends to come and eat oranges with her. Each of them is given a little, sharp knife with which to open the precious fruit; each starts to do so at the moment when Joseph appears to pour the wine; and down each snow-white wrist runs a stream of crimson blood. For so much beauty, so suddenly entering the hall, has captured each lady's eyes that her knife knows not where it should cut. And this was exactly as Mut had planned it when she told Joseph he must come in among them at such and such a moment. It is an unforgettable moment; nor did Mann need to invent it. His scholarship, which surely was enormous, found it for him in the Koran, in seventeen Persian poems, and in "countless renderings by pencil and brush." Those are the sources he reveals to us; but if we have access to none of them we can go to Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews* for a version graphic enough.

Not that Mann inserts the episode of the ladies' party with a flourish of narrative trumpets or with any brave show of art. Here also he is true to the comic tradition of storytelling, which plays down the narrative art. It says that history is more interesting than fiction; so history is what it pretends to write. Chaucer has his "author" whom he merely follows; Cervantes has his Arabian biographer whom he merely translates. The comic artist will not admit that he has invented anything; the truth is enough for him—Mann says "the facts"—and all truth is as old as the hills anyway; there can be no new stories, just as there can be nothing new under the sun; see the Bible as to that. Every man knows everything; except, of course, that some men forget what they know, or do not wholly realize it, and so commit the only sin that comedy is designed to deal with, namely, folly. Folly is not a fatal sin, though there are those who unaccountably grow fond of it in themselves; therefore it either can be cured or can be rendered harmless as a spectacle at which we wiser ones may smile. It is rendered harmless by under-

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standing: the fool's understanding at last, or if this is not to be expected, then ours; and probably too that of several other persons in the story. The essence of comedy is its love of understanding. That is why it goes in so heavily for talk—or rather, we hope, lightly: deliciously and lightly. The dialectic of comedy may seem queer, but it is dialectic nevertheless; and they are right who credit Plato with having perfected both philosophy and comedy in his matchless dialogues. Now it would be saying too much, if not too little, to say that the essence of tragedy is misunderstanding. The errors of tragic heroes are too vast to be so trivially dismissed. Yet they do misunderstand their situations and themselves; and in the rush of events which their own blindness accelerates they do dreadful things which with more time and light they would never have done. Tragedies are dark and short; more light, more time, more talk, would make literally all the difference in the world; but those blessings are not available. Whereas they are the very stuff of comedy, which, like John Tanner, keeps on talking though the heavens fall. But, in fact, they do not fall. In comedy there is neither the midnight of utter confusion nor the sudden blaze of a belated dawn. In comedy the hour is always noon.

And nothing much happens then. The action of any comedy is less interesting—certainly less memorable—than the discussions it contains. A tragedy whose plot cannot be remembered in the strict order of its events is no tragedy at all; the events create their own order, from which there is no escape, or else they have no meaning for the mind. This must have been what Aristotle meant when he said the soul of a tragedy was its plot; the action was everything. In comedy there is action too, or we should have no story; but it is most interesting for what can be said about it before and after it is done, which throws still further light upon the fact that comic poets underplay their plots and take no responsibility for them in the first place. By the same token they are indifferent to dramatic or narrative effects; they ignore the conventional devices for securing such effects; they lean over backwards to avoid melodrama, which to be sure they may approach as a possibility, but which they would rather parody than embrace.

So Mann in his great comedy refuses to make what tragedy would make, and what the Bible did make, out of certain recogni-

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tion scenes. The recognition scene is essential to tragedy, which lives on such bursts of feeling as it perfectly provides. There was an opportunity for Mann to contrive a meeting between Joseph and Mut-em-enet after Joseph came home from prison. But he discusses the possibility only to reject it. Romancers, he says, have tried their hands at such a scene, and the result is "Persian musk," is "attar of roses," which is to say, sweet nonsense. For one thing, "it has nothing to do with the facts." For another, their story was done. And even the recognition scenes which he is bound to accept because they come down to him and are a part of his duty—those between Joseph and his brothers at the climax and between Jacob and Joseph at the very end—he deliberately muffs, and here and there even mocks. Of course they are moving; but Mann does not want them to break our hearts, and he knows how to keep them from doing so. He wraps them in talk; the principals murmur to each other even while they weep; dialectic still holds the center of the stage. And as for the weeping, what would a tragic poet have to say of one who in the immortal scene between Joseph and his brothers transmogrifies the Biblical "he wept aloud" into: "His nose began to prickle inside, he sniffed a little, and his eyes all at once ran over"? Granted, on a later page—much later, for the scene is long—we are told that "glittering tears ran down his cheeks." This, to be sure, is more like drama; yet even there we are forced to suspect that the tears of Joseph *would* glitter, since everything about him shines. Nor at the moment when the great scene was preparing had the author kept us in suspense as to whether it would happen. The comic artist cares nothing for suspense, which indeed is never so indispensable to narrative as commonly it is thought to be. It is at best a second-rate device for generating interest where no interest naturally exists. At least this is true if it consists of no more than the artificial withholding from us of some information we need for understanding and would normally have. When it consists of telling us that a given thing will happen but letting us wait to see how it happens, and precisely when, it is a powerful because it is a natural narrative tool. And it is thus that Mann uses it, and confides to us that he does. "Joseph's suspense was great," he writes on one occasion; "on this point depended his future relations with the brothers. We, of course, are in no suspense: we know

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all the phases of the story by heart. . . . So in our wisdom we may smile at him." Such, remarks Mann on an earlier occasion, is the advantage of having an old story to retell. "If I were here a mere inventor of tales, what I have to tell would certainly expose me to the reproach of drawing too long a bow, and presuming far too much upon a credulity which after all has its limits. Luckily, such is not my role. I rest upon the traditional facts, which are not less sound because some of them ring as though they were newly minted. Thus I am in a position to state what I have to tell in an assured and tranquil tone that in the face of all doubts and reproaches carries conviction." A tragic poet who stopped his story to address his audience thus would instantly break his spell and lose all power to convince. For the comic poet there is no spell; or if there is one and its name is truth, it is just in this offhand way that he invokes it.

The truth about Joseph is, of course, a complicated thing which it is the main business of the book to convey. Mann's hero is perhaps not different from the one we meet in Genesis, nor is his father altered from the ancient Jacob; nor for that matter is their relation to each other built here upon ground which the original text did not at least lay out. But Mann's refinements are as many as they are marvelous. The brilliance and beauty of Joseph have few parallels in the fiction of the world. And the vanity. The problem was to make the vanity palatable, and it was solved by suggesting, not indeed in so many words, that it was like the vanity of a golden mirror which can no more help being what it is than a bright person can help being bright. Joseph might have bitten off his tongue, as Potiphar's poor wife all but did; yet he did not; he kept on saying with it the most fascinating and impudent things; and we are as glad of this as Jacob was, or Benjamin, or even the ten sullen half-brothers who in spite of themselves adored the speaker of them at the same time that they wanted to kill him, or at least to remove him from their sight forever. It was Jacob, however, who resisted Joseph least; which is a mild way of saying that he committed the sin of idolatry by elevating him to the rank of favorite son, somewhat as he had committed that same sin by loving Rachel for herself and not in God. Mann is willing to say that the doting father was the chief source of his son's misery, if misery it was. Perhaps it was never that; for the pits into which this youth was cast, first in

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the desert and then in Egypt, yielded in every case an experience he could dramatize; and there was no exercise he loved more. In no crisis of his life did he die so that he might be reborn. He does not look to us at the end like one of those truly great men of whom it can be said, not that they have lived a lot but that they have died a lot— have been, we sometimes say, in hell. No, in some amazing way he has not been touched by the bonfires he walked through. For one thing, though he would deny this, he has never ceased to assume that others must love him more than they love themselves. The assumption had been wrong both in the case of his brothers and in that of Mut-em-enet, and now he knows that it was wrong. Yet he has not changed in the secret depths of his heart where he still knows that he is like nobody else. "Have you ever heard the voice of self-denying love?" Jacob asks him this in the Land of Goshen, and the question answers itself. When on the last page of the book Joseph insists to his brothers that they are to forgive him, not he to forgive them, he speaks in the character he has enjoyed from the beginning. "If it is a question of pardon between us human beings, then it is I myself must beg for it, for you had perforce to be cast in the villain's part so that things might turn out as they did." The hero's part had been so naturally his that he still needs no rehearsing in it.

Not that we love him less because all this is true. The triumph of Mann is that we love on every page the hero he himself loves this side of idolatry. Idolatry in Mann would have destroyed his comedy, since comedy admits no gods that are made of earth. That he resisted the sin, tempted though he surely was, is a triumph more stupendous still. The sign of his resistance is the impression of Joseph he leaves with us at last: the impression of one whose understanding is so fine that the light in his mind almost puts out the stars—yet not those stars at which his great-grandfather Abraham, that wonderful old man, stared without speaking a single word. "One can easily be in a story," Mann has Joseph say, "and not understand it." Joseph understood everything in his story except himself. His light never shone altogether inward, producing perfect silence.

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Garden of My Childhood

KUANGCHI C. CHANG

"Run, run, run,"
Whispered the vine,
"A horde is on the march no Great Wall can halt."
But in the garden of my childhood
The old maple was painting a sunset
And the crickets were singing a carol;
No, I had no wish to run.

"Run, run, run,"
Gasped the wind,
"The horde has entered the Wall."
Down the scorched plain rode the juggernaut
And crossed the Yangtse as if it were a ditch;
The proverbial rats had abandoned the ship
But I had no intention of abandoning
The garden of my childhood.

"Run, run, run,"
Roared the sea,
"Run before the bridge is drawn."
In the engulfed calm after the storm
The relentless tom-tom of the rice-sprout song
Finally ripped my armor,
And so I ran.

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I ran past the old maple by the terraced hall
And the singing crickets under the latticed wall,
And I kept on running down the walk
Paved with pebbles of memory big and small
Without turning to look until I was out of the gate
Through which there be no return at all.

Now, eons later and worlds away,
The running is all done
For I am at my destination: Another garden,
Where the unpebbled walk awaits tomorrow's footprints,
Where my old maple will come with the sunset's glow
And my crickets will sing under the wakeful pillow.

✪ Born near Shanghai, KUANGCHI C. CHANG received a classical background in Chinese literature and art before his Western education. He first came to this country to study architecture at Columbia, and after graduation returned to China. Fleeing from communism in 1949, he returned to the United States and taught the history of Oriental art at the University of Oklahoma for two years. Since 1953 Mr. Chang has been working in an architectural firm in New York City. Some of his translations from Sung poetry have appeared in the *Hudson Review*.

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The International Geophysical Year

LAURENCE M. GOULD

MAN'S MOST AMBITIOUS PROGRAM in international scientific cooperation begins July 1, 1957, and will continue through December 31, 1958. Destined to be a great landmark in the history of science, this program is known as the International Geophysical Year (IGY).

Geophysics has had a long period of incubation. Since the time of his earliest speculations about his world, man has been measuring the earth, recording data about its climate, its oceans, and other geophysical phenomena; yet even now, in the middle of the twentieth century, our records in all fields of geophysics are fragmentary and local. The various fields are so intermeshed that no single discipline can advance indefinitely. All in turn are dependent upon the tools developed by the physicist and the engineer. Except for the electronic instrumentation now available, the present effort could not even have been considered. But now our total knowledge in geophysics, combined with advances in related fields and the availability of new tools, insures the success of the IGY.

Geophysics is the application of the tools of physics to the study of the earth and its atmosphere. All of man's major activities are inextricably bound up with the geophysical sciences. To a large extent they are the determining factors in such fields as agriculture, transportation and communication of all sorts. Because of his ever increasing mobility, man must know more and more about his environment; safety on land, sea and in the air depends upon better forecasting of the weather, better knowledge of usable radio frequencies, and better knowledge of the upper air for transportation and guided missile flight.

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Geophysics presents quite different problems from those of the laboratory sciences. The nuclear physicist can go into his laboratory and perform experiments at will, but in geophysics the laboratory is the world itself. Nature performs the experiments; man makes the observations. Because all geophysical phenomena are related in one way or another to solar activity, the interval 1957-58 was selected for the IGY, as solar activity will be near the top of its eleven-year cycle at that time.

The present international effort was anticipated by the First Polar Year in 1882-83 and the Second Polar Year in 1932-33. Both of these involved but a few nations and were restricted to the north-polar region; yet the results of the first gave us our first definitive data about the aurora and the basis for all subsequent research. During the second, studies of the ionosphere by newly developed techniques gave rise to communications data that have been estimated to have a value in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

During the forthcoming IGY more than five thousand scientists from fifty-six countries will be observing the same phenomena from stations all over the world. An important result should be the greatest break-through to date in a fundamental understanding of such major phenomena as ionospheric activity and atmospheric circulation.

The IGY is under the direct sponsorship of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), the chief continuing international scientific organization. In 1952 the Council established the Comité Spécial de l'Année Géophysique Internationale (CSAGI) to plan and carry out the IGY Program.

Each of the fifty-six nations participating in the IGY has an adhering body appointed to carry out its program. In the United States the total effort is supported in three ways. The National Academy of Sciences is the agency responsible for planning and directing the total scientific program. The National Science Foundation, as the fiscal agent, has assumed the responsibility for securing federal appropriations to finance the program. The Departmen of Defense is supplying logistic support for the expeditions

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to Antarctica and the launching mechanisms for rockets and the earth satellite vehicle.

As the United States' adhering body to ICSU the National Academy of Sciences established the United States National Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Joseph Kaplan. This committee is a group of distinguished geophysicists who in turn are assisted by panels of experts in each of the disciplines. Some three hundred experts from private and public institutions are involved.

Answers to many questions of both theoretical and practical importance will be sought during the IGY. What is the relationship between long-range radio transmission and sun spots and solar flares? Is the earth's climate changing? Where do cosmic rays come from? These are but samples of the kinds of questions inherent in the IGY.

The particular geophysical phenomena to be studied by way of finding answers are aurora and air glow, cosmic rays, geomagnetism, glaciology, ionospheric physics, longitude and latitude, meteorology, oceanography, seismology, gravity and solar activity.

Atmospheric studies will be greatly extended beyond all previous records by the programs in rocketry and satellites. At least six hundred rockets and six small earth-circling satellites with highly specialized instruments will be launched.

The earth satellite program is the most dramatic and most publicized aspect of the whole IGY. The mere announcement of the program gave rise to much speculation about man being on the threshold of space flight. Such speculations have little relation to present realities. The earth satellite will really be an extension of rocketry exploration and has been aptly described as a "long playing rocket."

Each of the six satellites will have special instruments which will tele-radio back to earth new and important data about such phenomena as the density of the outer atmosphere, the fluctuations and intensities of cosmic rays, fluctuations of the earth's magnetic fields, more accurate measurements of longitude and latitude, and so on.

During the IGY a great variety of surface observations will be

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carried out on a continuing basis. In addition, three to five Regular World Days will be set aside each month for certain more difficult and specialized observations. Likewise, ten-day intervals of highly concentrated meteorological observations following the summer and winter solstices and the spring and fall equinoxes will be scheduled as World Meteorological Intervals.

A number of World Archive and Data Centers will be established to organize and make available to scientists all over the world as promptly as possible the data acquired as the results of the IGY measurements and observations.

The total scientific program is of such magnitude and complexity that only a few major relationships can be pointed out in this brief account. Each special field is characterized by its global nature and its relationship to solar activity, for solar radiation in electromagnetic and particle form is the major source of energy for the earth's atmosphere and is responsible for all types of life.

The fields of meteorology, oceanography and glaciology have very special interrelationships, for they involve the earth's store of water. Water exists in the atmosphere as vapor; in frozen form as glaciers, snow and ice sheets; and in water as rivers, lakes, seas and the oceans. There is a continuous process of interchange among these depositories, and all of them are related to the circulation of the atmosphere and the heat budget of the earth.

The atmosphere provides the ingredients of oxygen and moisture which sustain life. It further makes that life possible by shielding us from dangerous cosmic radiations and solar radiations that might be lethal. But no other property of the atmosphere is quite as important as its motion. In a windless world the tropics would become intolerably hot and the rest of the earth unbearably cold. The life of the planet as we know it depends upon the distribution of heat and moisture by wind. The atmosphere is the working fluid of a great heat engine driven by the sun that picks up heat in the tropics and discharges it in the polar regions. Between latitudes 38 degrees North and 38 degrees South the earth receives more radiation than it keeps. Beyond these latitudes there is a deficit with the resulting major exchange of air masses. There is

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still much that is not known about the manner in which this exchange takes place.

Oceanography is second only to the atmosphere in conditioning weather and climate. For the first time in man's history we shall be able to make simultaneous measurements of the fluctuations in sea level all over the world. This is the most effective means of studying the weather of the oceans. We know that the major movement of the oceans is roughly like that of the atmosphere. The cold waters from the polar regions move slowly along the ocean bottoms toward the lower latitudes, where they rise, become warm, and then proceed from the tropics polarward. Within this general circulation there are all sorts of ramifications yet to be studied. Surprisingly little is know about the deep currents of the oceans.

One of the intriguing problems in oceanography and meteorology relates to the content of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is one of the atmosphere's principal ingredients which enables it to retain solar heat for the earth. It is the normal result of combustion. If we continue to burn up our fossil fuels of coal, oil and gas at the present rate, within fifty to seventy-five years the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere may be doubled. Should this happen, magnolias might bloom in Greenland again! But there are some unknown factors which would alter such a situation. We do not know how rapidly carbon dioxide is absorbed by the oceans and by the various masses of glacial ice. Measurements will be made during the IGY.

During the great Ice Age, glaciers covered more than 30 per cent of the surface of the earth. Even today they cover more than 10 per cent of it. Our studies in glaciology will give us our first world view of the variation of glaciers. This will reveal much about past climates and help us to develop a yardstick for long-range forecasts in the future, for glaciers are very sensitive indicators of climatic changes.

The ionosphere, geomagnetism, cosmic rays and the aurora are so related that a study of one involves a study of the rest. All have direct relations to solar activity and radio blackouts.

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The ionosphere is the rarified ionized part of the atmosphere from fifty to two hundred and fifty miles above the surface of the earth. In somewhat the same way a mirror reflects light, the ionosphere reflects radio waves making possible radio telephony and navigation and long-range radio communication. One expert has stated that the "long-time equivalent value of the ionosphere is in excess of ten billion dollars."

While most of the earth's magnetic field originates in the solid core of the earth, the major variations and fluctuations stem from electric currents in the ionosphere.

The earth's atmosphere is constantly bombarded by electrically charged particles from outer space, most of which are believed to be protons. The high-speed particles produce cosmic rays while the relatively slow-speed particles produce (1) ionospheric storms (2) magnetic storms and (3) the aurora, the luminous trace of the charged particles where they are funneled into the earth's atmosphere over the magnetic poles.

While observations in many geophysical fields will yield new data about the sun, special attention will be devoted to the study of solar flares, coronal activity and sun spots.

Values for longitude and latitude are much less accurate than is generally assumed. Even today we do not know within a matter of several hundred feet how far apart the continents are or where certain islands may be. More precise determinations of longitude and latitude will be made at twenty IGY stations around the world. Such more exact data have immediate practical application in the use of guided missiles whether for purposes of destruction or for purposes of transportation.

Most IGY programs will be carried out at long established stations or at new ones in easily accessible regions. Antarctica presents special problems because of its inhospitable climate and its inaccessibility. The logistic support for our far-flung Antarctic IGY activities provided by the Department of Defense is even now one of the greatest achievements in the history of polar exploration. Under the able leadership of Rear Admiral George Dufek, the commanding officer of Task Force 43, Operations Deep Freeze

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#1 (1955-56) and #2 (1956-57) have successfully established our six scientific bases, including one to be operated jointly with New Zealand, in addition to the naval operational base at McMurdo Sound. Byrd Station at 80 degrees South, 120 degrees West, and the Amundsen-Scott Station at the South Pole are the first permanent inland or winter stations ever established in Antarctica.

In addition to the United States, the following countries plan to have stations on the continent or on islands near it: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Great Britain, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and Soviet Russia. There will be a total of some fifty-four stations in the over-all Antarctic program. While the problems of carrying out the observations in the International Geophysical Year in Antarctica are formidable, yet the results will be of major importance because it is the largest unoccupied area of the globe. Most fields of geophysics now demand for completeness specific data that are available only from observations on the polar continent.

Special studies in magnetism are possible because of the location of the magnetic and geomagnetic poles on the Antarctic continent. Only on Antarctica can the aurora australis be fully observed.

Solar radiation is assumed to be the principal agent in breaking up atoms to form the ionosphere. Our base at the South Pole will discover what happens to the ionosphere when there is no direct solar radiation for six months. Does it thin out almost to the point of disappearance? Does it descend much below fifty miles above the surface of the earth?

The magnetic field of the earth is the chief instrument for analyzing cosmic rays. The rays are bent in such a way that the low-energy rays can only enter in high latitudes near the magnetic poles. The connections between solar effects and cosmic rays are more conspicuous for low-energy rays than for others. Observations in the far South and the far North may therefore reveal new fundamental facts on the origin of cosmic rays.

The hub of the atmospheric circulation for the Southern Hemisphere is located on Antarctica, but whether or not it coincides

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with the South Geographic Pole is but one of many meteorological questions that await solution. The Antarctic icecap is the world's greatest cold weather factory; but whether the great masses of cold air which form there play an active part in the general atmospheric circulation of the earth or whether they are largely sealed off from the rest of the atmosphere is not known.

More than half a century ago Simpson, a meteorologist on the first Scott Expedition, pointed out that from time to time great pressure waves or surges of air spread out from what is now the general neighborhood of Byrd Station. Whether Simpson's assumptions are valid we still do not know, though later meteorologists have shown that some polar outbreaks of air can completely disrupt mid-latitude circulation.

So fundamental are the relationships believed to be between Antarctic atmospheric circulation and that of the rest of the world that three meridional chains of stations are being established between the South and the North Poles. One roughly parallels the meridians of 70 to 80 degrees West, one follows 10 degrees East, and a third parallels 140 degrees East. Precise, carefully synchronized observations can thus be made which should give us definitive data on the interchange of air masses between the tropics and the polar regions.

A unique phase of the glaciological program in Antarctica will be measurements of the thickness of the great icecap. Inasmuch as an estimated 90 per cent of the world's land ice is on Antarctica, the thickness of the ice and changes in its volume are not merely matters of interest to the glaciologist alone. The return of but a few feet of thickness of ice as melt water to the oceans would have serious effects in many places; and if all the ice were melted into the sea, its level would rise from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet. All the world's seaports and much of its most densely populated areas would be submerged. Great changes in volume of Antarctic ice have occurred in the past and such changes may occur again, but they will not do so with catastrophic speed.

Arctic ice masses have been melting at such a rapid rate during the twentieth century that if the rate continues to the end of the

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century, ships will easily navigate the now ice-clogged Arctic Ocean. Whether similar melting conditions obtain in Antarctica now, we do not know, although looking back over a long period of time we find evidence that the Antarctic icecap was at one time at least one thousand feet thicker than now.

The IGY is a good example of a new approach to world unity. The geophysicist is inevitably a truly international scientist. All considerations other than purely scientific ones are omitted. For instance, the complicated matter of claims in Antarctica is forgotten as the United States, Soviet Russia, Britain, France and eight other nations co-operate in the first comprehensive exploration ever made of this single polar continent. In similar fashion the satellites to be launched as part of the United States' IGY program will orbit around the earth without regard to any nation's rights to air space above territories, and no questions will be raised.

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Regards the Changes

The Petroglyphic Art

MARK HEDDEN

Rouged, daubed
With lichen, owl-eyed, with bigger
Grin than dog's, she crowds
The littered nest, her feet
Caked in offal.
Her bony wings shelter
Odd testaments of bone and shell,
Painted bowls and dolls of horn.
Her eyes are the coldest thing.
Geometric to a fault, she stays
Lustrous, somehow, by these ovoid
Holes of white, left to stare.
She persists, in spite, unabashed,
Cold against the coldest element.

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Fowler's Generation

JACQUES BARZUN

THOSE WHO WERE AT THE THRESHOLD of a writing career when "Fowler" appeared in 1926 feel among themselves a common bond unlike any other. It is, for one thing, an all-sufficing bond, which implies much else. That is why "Fowler" is such a superb conversation piece. It has the advantage of being an author and a single book, an oracle and an orthodoxy, and yet it is free from the disadvantage of infallible art and the burden of a historic personality. One cannot be tiresome about "Fowler" as about Jane Austen; one may be devoted to him but there can be no question of any love chatter. Fowler is of all things manly, the kind of friend with whom it is a pleasure to dispute.

What then is "Fowler"? To my generation the *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* came as a counselor and teacher but also as a touchstone for a certain type of mind; the work was a social and not only an intellectual landmark. The dour title did not promise all these things, but readers soon found themselves involved in party feeling and moral questions. In browsing through the book they came, for example, upon the heading SUPERIORITY and found this:

"Surprise a person of the class that is supposed to keep servants cleaning his own boots, and either he will go on with the job while he talks to you, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, or else he will explain that the bootboy or scullery-maid is ill and give you to understand that he is, despite appearances, superior to boot-cleaning. If he takes the second course, you conclude that he is not superior to it; if the first, that perhaps he is. So it is with the various apologies (*to use an expressive colloquialism—if we may adopt*

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the current slang—as the streetboys have it—in the vernacular phrase . . .) to which recourse is had by writers who wish to safeguard their dignity and yet be vivacious, to combine comfort with elegance, to touch pitch and not be defiled."

Or again, Fowler's pupils found the term GENTEELISM explained and exemplified by a list of words such as: *anent, assist, domestic, edifice, endeavor, lady-dog, perspire, peruse, proceed,* which are genteel when substituted for *about, help, servant, building, try, bitch, sweat, read* and *go.* To us who had just been reading Henry James on the Question of Our Speech and Santayana on the death of the genteel tradition, Fowler made it apparent that diction and idiom and style—Usage, in short—embodied the same social attitudes that we reproved in literature, attitudes having deep roots in our emotional life, where they found themselves in harmony, perhaps, or in conflict, with our political convictions.

What made the reading and rereading of Fowler necessary was that despite his firm views he was not an easily classifiable doctrinaire. He knew, and said, that he was a gentleman—see the article ENGLAND; and he never hesitated to brand as affectation and vulgarity the cheap elegancies and looseness of mind sometimes associated with the democratic outlook. Yet he shared that outlook, and one had to conclude that he was not a purist or a pedant. He was not in awe of his own classical and modern learning; he used it to make things clear, never to gain merit by imposing some awkward form of words congenial only to the retrospective sense.

In short, Fowler showed by his precepts and by his style what it could mean to take a reasoned view of the democratic citizen's duty toward language. It meant making an effort to be understood but also to seek the best; it meant forgetting ego but not distinction. To that extent Fowler's way was aristocratic. The word *usage* once conveyed the combined obligations—the social one of pleasing by simplicity and clarity and suitability of language; and the intellectual one of respect for tradition and reason through a conscious choice of the best forms.

There was great need thirty years ago, and there is greater need now, for this kind of counsel particularized. Thirty years ago the "scientific" opponents of grammar and usage were just triumphing

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over what they considered the old superstitions and snobberies, and in their crusade were using the fallacious arguments of natural growth, irresistible change and democratic freedom. The aim was to encourage rather than restrain the anarchy which is the unavoidable first fact in the use of language. In a word, they made their arbiter Use as against Usage.

Today, these scientists command the field and hurl anathemas on all dissenters from their simple doctrine. Today also, we have an acknowledged "problem of communication." I am not suggesting here a sequence of cause and effect in an exclusive but in a contributory sense. The neglect of the conventions of speech and the self-applauding indulgence in haphazard use certainly play a part in that hardening of the mind's ear which, when general, we term the problem of communication. One has only to read the literature on communication and the "communication arts" to see in that prose itself where one great difficulty lies.

A Fowler, then, is always needed because the anarchy is always with us—in the United States especially; for here the English language is subjected to an inordinate amount of distortion, blurring and confusion. Foreign speakers and writers are numerous, and the false liberalism of *laisser faire* gives prompt authority to error and caprice. It is not, of course, any single violation of meaning or idiom, however frequent, that harms the common property of language. If frequent, the error becomes general—becomes the language—in the traditional way of change. What does harm, now and hereafter, is the loss of the feeling for words, the disappearance of any instinct and any preferences about their formation and combination. For this soon means the abolition of convenient devices for being brief, exact and possibly agreeable.

The scientific students of language, who inveigh with so much unscientific passion against normative grammar and ideals of correctness, assert that all one can ask of a speaker or writer is that he be "effective"—specious counsel which begs the question and raises another: How to be effective when conventions break down? One might as well expect motorists to drive "effectively" without lights or traffic rules, scrambling to their destination anyhow.

In any civilized country, the countervailing force which keeps

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the headlong and haphazard traffic in words from wrecking much useful machinery is the speech and writing of the educated. It is the felicities and dangers of this speech that Fowler discussed under many heads suggestive of the conventions, from pronunciation to syntax. And it is their variety, subtlety and strength that Fowler made vivid in his spiky essays full of examples.

Since his day, which ended in the mid-thirties, a new generation has grown up to whom he is no longer a household word, and changes have taken place in the language which alter the status of words and constructions formerly on trial. For both reasons a revised edition of his work was desirable, if possible one that might take account of American usage. The attempt by Horwill to provide an American companion to Fowler a few years after the appearance of *Modern English Usage* was a ludicrous failure, owing chiefly to the author's lack of familiarity with current American speech and writing. Now a fresh attempt has been made, this time by an American, to supply the want while bringing Fowler up to date. *A Dictionary of American-English Usage*, by Margaret Nicholson, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), is explicitly based on Fowler and addresses modern readers on either side of the Atlantic with a professedly equal voice.

The result, I regret to say, is a disappointment. No one, to be sure, expected that a second Fowler of American birth would be found who could interlard the original doctrine with comparably entertaining and memorable pieces of instruction and reproof. It took a very special talent—a kind of genius—to conceive and execute *Modern English Usage*; and the curious like myself who hunted down Fowler's other essays, on life and letters, discovered that when deprived of his great subject the Petronius of style was an awkward and uninteresting writer. Again, in the earlier *King's English*, written with his younger brother Francis, one finds the same good judgment and extensive knowledge as in H. W.'s *Modern Usage*, but none of the strength, ease and imagination of the later work.

It follows that even a competent, judicious alteration of "Fowler" would certainly dim its brilliance; yet there would be compensation in a suitable modernizing and Americanizing of the

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classic original. Unfortunately, competence and judiciousness did not preside over the revision now offered us. Except for a very few short articles, such as the ones on *comprise* and *disinterested,* the new matter hardly touches on modern usage—American *or* English —but dwells on details of interest to copy editors, matters of preferred spellings, the italicizing and punctuating of abbreviations, and other things which scarcely affect language and about which it is in fact impossible to indicate prevailing practice. For example, Miss Nicholson asserts that in the United States today it is usual to omit the *e* in the middle of *acknowledgement* and *dislodgement* as one does in *judgment.* My impression, recently reinforced by inquiry and a random sampling of newspapers and books, is just the other way: except in *judgment,* I found only two instances of the omitted *e.*

In such preoccupations, Fowler's editor does indeed represent the contemporary American philosophy of style: concerned with mechanics and careless of substance, engrossed in technicalities and deficient in knowledge. She uses valuable space to define *half binding* and *half title* as if she were competing with Collins' *Authors' and Printers' Dictionary,* and she passes by the most obvious gaps created in Fowler by the lapse of time and the transatlantic shifting of the point of view. For instance, she reproduces his definition of *to a degree* without a word about its recent reversal of meaning, and she takes up *extent* without mentioning the new *to an extent,* built on the analogy of the other.

One may in fact generalize and say that Miss Nicholson has gone about her work without any clear idea of Fowler's original intention, hence of what adapting this intention to American problems might mean. Collating the pair of texts for opportunities missed yields a distressing quantity of serious failures. For example: under -AL NOUNS, Fowler called *appraisal* "unfamiliar and doubtful to the common man." Miss Nicholson copies this without a murmur; but under *appraisal* itself, she terms it "standard U. S." Under *amour-propre* she again follows Fowler in giving its meaning as "vanity," and fails to mention a frequent use of it in a meaning akin to "self-respect." Under *Anthony,* she asserts that "in U. S. the *h* is often pronounced, especially in surnames." I would under-

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take to gather into one room all the American citizens who do *not* pronounce the *h*.

Still copying Fowler, she repeats his strictures on *betterment* and *foreword* which are by now standard U. S., with meanings perceptibly different from "improvement" and "preface." It is no longer unusual for a book to have a foreword *and* a preface. Again, had Fowler lived and emigrated, he would not have run past *catalogue* without a word about the forms "cataloged" and "cataloging" which enchant the devotees of library science; and—supposing him to have kept his eyes and ears open as of yore—he would not have persisted in his belief that *artiste* is a useful word. Still less would he have dreamed that anyone in this country ever refers to "dirty work at the cross*ways*."*

A few more illustrations will show the same dispiriting lack of judgment. One of Fowler's great services to speech was his attack on the needless adverbs ending in *-ly* after verbs of sensation or motion; but he surely would not have been content to point out that the true colloquial idiom for "I am ill" is "I feel bad"; he would have added that "I feel badly" is also usual in another sense. Since the purpose of the revision was to bring matters up to date, how account for Miss Nicholson's disparaging definition of *baroque*, which is actually in retrogression over Fowler's more generous one, written thirty years ago? And in the same aesthetic vein, why no mention of the special U. S. meaning of *burlesque* in "burlesque show"? English readers may consult this mutilated Fowler in the belief that they can learn our colloquial speech well enough to use it in novels. If so, they are riding for a fall: imagine using *bunk* to signify "anything done for mere show; insincere publication, nonsense;" as in, presumably: "Henry Ford said, 'History is an insincere publication.' "

Most serious, perhaps, of the recurrent errors is that of not catching up Fowler's insularities and antiquities. He deserved better than to be mangled just enough for show, creating the impression of a systematic review and leaving him with his worst faults left—as in CHINAMAN, ETC.: "The normal uses are: *A Chinaman*

* Meredith's title, however, is still *Diana of the Crossways*, not *Crossway;* the new "Fowler" is not so carefully proofread as its ancestor.

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(rarely *Chinese*); three *Chinamen* (sometimes *Chinese*); 50,000 *Chinese* (sometimes *Chinamen*; the *Chinese* (rarely *Chinamen*); . . . " "Chinaman (-men)" is now as purely colloquial as "Jap," and as offensive. On a number of graver matters, too, such as FUSED PARTICIPLE, Fowler now calls for amendment. Again, dozens of his quoted examples visibly date from the reign of Edward VII and contain words and proper names that are as mysterious as the handwriting on the wall: American readers will stop only a moment at *wharf* and *treacle,* but what are they to make of "will not crane at" and what to them is the King's Proctor?

Besides alteration and excision, the modern reader had a right to expect liberal additions, in the spirt of Fowler, upon errors, doubts and confusions arisen in the past quarter century. Reading *disinterested,* on which the editor is sound but mild, suggests a number of others. Why do we hear nothing of the American use, abuse or misuse of *absenteeism, basic, cohort, connive, skills, compulsive, epoch, essential, evaluation, drastic, major,* plus the use of strange possessives—"the nation's capital," "Florida's governor"; the return to a double *as* in "As much as I like him, I can't forgive him" and the use of *-wise* as a postpositive meaning "in relation to," as in "Budget-wise, he's a fool."

It will be readily granted that these several kinds of deficiencies observable on every page of the revised Fowler would be enough to make one discard it without another word. But there is one more remark to make about the work as a cultural document: it demonstrates in its new portions the need for just such a dictionary as the original Fowler was. I spoke earlier of the single force counteracting in a fanatically verbal civilization the wear and tear of the language. That force is supposedly exerted by those who have done some studying and who come before the public as speakers and writers. Miss Nicholson is one of these and even more than this, since (as we are told) she was "formerly Head of the Publishing Department of Oxford University Press. In this capacity she worked with authors and Oxford editors in the revision and final editing of manuscripts accepted for publication." It is therefore doubly allowable to ask, How does she write?

A former guardian of forms, an arbiter of taste, perhaps a be-

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getter of new felicities, she may have missed her aim as a lexicographer of Usage, but surely she is one of those on whom we can rely for exact diction and coherent utterance. Alas, alas! her writing plunges us into despair from the outset. In keeping with her mechanic habit of mind she begins by abbreviating the title of Fowler's masterpiece to MEU, heading her Preface with a motto from him labeled in this barbaric way. Throughout the Preface, this pseudo-Chinese sage recurs, in alternation with her own misbegotten AEU, quite as if the affectionate initials O.E.D. (or GBS) licensed indiscriminate imitation.

The tone of that Preface, moreover, is patronizing under a pretense of admiration. Fowler is "provocative," and it appears that "many of us today, English and American, have neither the time nor the scholarship to follow through the fascinating but sometimes exasperating labyrinth. . . ." Moreover, Fowler is guilty of the "Socratic method of teaching by wrong examples [*sic*]." The implication is that here is a saner book for busier people. But it could be argued that the method of teaching by wrong examples has not been given up; the difference is that the wrong examples are now no longer in italics. Here is a random selection from the early pages:

. . . the absolute construction gives a heaviness of style; it is best used sparingly.

aestivate: summer sleeping as opposite of hibernate.

. . . except in prose of a really poetic type.

ambivalence: simultaneous attraction and repulsion to the same object or person.

amoral: not connected with morality.

apposite: appropriate (to), well put.

assonance: the careless repetition of sound in words or syllables [sole definition].

classified material: . . . "because of endangerment to national security."

federation, confederation, confederacy: there is no rigid distinction between the words.

fifth column: secret supporters of the enemy within the defense line.

got, gotten: "Have you got the number yet?" is legitimate.

corpus delicti: the basic facts necessary to the commission of a crime.

It is of course easier, though quite uncalled for in a book on Usage, to define *haematoxylin* as is done on page 227; and perhaps

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a gift for definition is so rare that we should not expect it of editors who "work with authors" on "manuscripts accepted for publication." But we do expect correct information—since all it requires is looking up—as well as the ability to know how much description suffices to give a clear idea of the thing defined. So judged, some of the factual explanations in this garbled Fowler are unacceptable; for example:

éclat: now used in English chiefly in the sense of universal acclamation.
chiaroscuro: in art, the employment of light and shade, omitting the colors [sole definition].
on the carpet: under discussion.
carte blanche: "white paper," hence, full discretionary power.
collage . . . Art: an assortment of fragments put together to make an artistic composition.
à[l']outrance: to the utmost, to death.

It is a sign of the times also that terms like most of these were included by Fowler solely for their easiest English pronunciation. He left to the ordinary dictionaries the task of explaining them, unless some point of usage was connected with the word or phrase. This saved space, established coherence, and avoided the mock-encyclopedic effect toward which most American dictionaries strive. The ideal seems to be: general science, the lives of great men, useful French phrases, and cures for snake bite, all under one cover. Meanwhile one weeps to see Fowler stripped and re-accoutered by an unskilled hand for ends which he would repudiate and which show him to his posterity of new readers in a deplorable travesty.

A dictionary of American-English Usage is still to be compiled.

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Let Love Consume

DOROTHY LEE RICHARDSON

Let love consume you
Though what will spring,
A phoenix from that fire,
You may never know:
What incandescent wing,
From pity and desire
Burning high, arise and soar;
What singing joy or sorrow
Fly off to what dim shore;
What feathers far away,
In years yet lying fallow,
Swoop and circle where before
Nothing stirred.
That may arise
The unbelievable bird
Toward the inconceivable skies,
Let love consume today
What will be gone tomorrow
Anyway.

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The Red-Tagging of Negro Protest

JANE CASSELS RECORD

A RECURRENT THEME coming out of the South these days describes desegregation as part of a gigantic Communist scheme to subvert the American way of life. Almost every occurrence of racial friction produces its quota of speeches and editorials labeling Negro protest as Communist inspired or, at the very least, Communist tinged. When a Georgia congressman charged, on the floor of the House, that responsibility for the present "confusion and strife" over integration must "lie directly at the door of" the Communist party, representatives from widely scattered districts of the Deep South rose to add their endorsement. Several states have invoked dust-covered antisubversive statutes against the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The junior senator from Mississippi went so far as to suggest that the Supreme Court of the United States had been "indoctrinated and brainwashed by left-wing pressure groups."

If such thinking were confined to the lunatic fringe or to cynics who make political capital out of this sort of thing, the matter could be dismissed without comment. But the idea that desegregation and communism are somehow inextricably linked has gained currency with people who are neither paranoic nor callously opportunistic. It creeps into the everyday conversation of ordinary Southerners, sometimes even so-called moderates who, though hating integration, are nevertheless resigned to its inevitability and determined to prevent the kind of violence and schism that hotheads precipitated in 1860.

In the small towns and villages of the rural South, where white

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farmers gather to drink Cokes and talk about desegregation, it is common to hear such remarks as: "The great majority of our niggras don't want to mix in the schools—it's just a few of them that the Communists have stirred up"; and "Sure, I reckon it's natural that the colored folks would want to better themselves some, but they never would have gotten any of these equality ideas in their heads if they'd been let alone"; and "If the N.A.A.C.P. isn't Communistic, then why has it been working hand in hand with the Communists on this desegregation thing?"

In the larger towns and cities conversations may be a little less bald, but the central theme is there. This is not to suggest that all white Southerners think this way—not even all those who believe in segregation. Opinion ranges about as widely in the South as in other sections of the country. There are some Alabamians who know integration is the American way, just as there are Minnesotans who favor segregation. Furthermore, there is in every region a type of person who is ready to link communism with anything he doesn't like. One can find nothing remarkable in the fact that *this* variety of Southerner links communism with integration.

The point here is that the Communist-plot theory of desegregation has gained adherents among a much wider group—among people who ten or fifteen years ago would have treated a suggestion of this kind with the disdain it merits. Today, eager to convince themselves and others that Red plotters are at the bottom of the integration movement, they seize upon any smoke wisp of Communist involvement in the race issue to "prove" that there is fire in their basic accusation. The idea that desegregation is associated with communism has spread to such an extent that a prominent Catholic clergyman felt called upon recently to reassure Catholics that in joining or supporting the N.A.A.C.P. they would not be helping a subversive cause.

Now, designation of the desegregation movement as a Communist plot is obviously fallacious. It is true that advocates of the plot thesis can point to Paul Robeson and Angelo Herndon, to the noisy concern of the American Communist party with the Negro question off and on for more than thirty years, and to the ostenta-

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tious intervention of Communists in the Scottsboro Case and every other racial *cause célèbre*. But to say that the N.A.A.C.P. must be Communist tinged because both it and the Communists have propagandized for civil rights is as incongruous as saying that General George Marshall must have been Communist tinged because both he and the Communists wanted a second front in 1944.

After all, Frederick Douglass, John Brown, the Atlanta race riot and the N.A.A.C.P. do antedate the Russian Revolution. The American Negro's discontent with second-class status reaches back to the slave revolts of the 1600's, long before Lenin's grandfather was born. Furthermore, the desegregation issue has come to a head at just the time that the American Communist party is at its lowest ebb of prestige and influence. The intensified drive for integration can be much more reasonably attributed to the Negro's new bargaining position, economically and politically, than to Communist agitation; the gains which the colored man has made in the past two decades have merely whetted his desire for further progress.

People are much less likely to protest their lot when they are still at the bottom of the pit than when they have climbed high enough to see over the edges. More and more Negroes are scaling the walls. Draft service in a desegregated army has given an ever growing number of colored boys from the Deep South a taste of what life could be like; and here the role of "agitator" was played, not by William Z. Foster and Eugene Dennis, but by Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower when they eliminated discrimination in the armed forces.

Another item that contradicts the Communist-plot theory is the fact that Communists are not essentially desegregationists. Historically, "self-determination for the Negro people of the Black Belt," rather than desegregation, has been the principal Communist theme. The Stalinist International envisaged for Negroes a separate territorial state, the boundaries of which would encompass every district whose colored inhabitants outnumbered whites, rather than full integration in American life. In this approach it misjudged the American Negro and his aspirations. Separate states and self-determination smacked too much of Jim Crow to the native

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colored man. The N.A.A.C.P. and other indigenous organizations have been able to use this basic Communist error as a powerful weapon in their successful struggle to keep free of Communist control.

True, Communists today are publicly advocating desegregation and turning American racial friction to good account in their propaganda campaign to win the colored peoples of Asia and Africa. But Southern compliance with the Supreme Court decisions is the last thing Communists want, because it would take away their most effective ammunition in the ideological warfare of East against West.

The struggle for Negro rights has been a sometime thing with the Communist party. Unlike the N.A.A.C.P., which has pressed constantly and single-mindedly for desegregation during the whole four and one-half decades of its existence, the Party views Negro protest as something to be turned on and off at the demands of Russian foreign policy. American Negroes have not forgotten that during the period following Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, when Communists were giving their all to the war effort, the Party actually called for suppression of Negro demands for reform, labeling them an unnecessary disruption in the prosecution of the war. If the N.A.A.C.P. needed white guidance, Communists would be one of the last groups to which it would turn.

Yet another weakness of the Communist-plot thesis lies in the fact that, even in the heyday of Communist influence, the Party never made the impact on the Negro community that it was generally supposed to have made. Linkage of desegregation efforts with communism flies in the face of the most conservative kind of testimony. In 1953, J. Edgar Hoover, reviewing an F.B.I. study of 5,395 leading American Communists, found only 411 of them to be colored—a considerably smaller percentage than Negroes represent in the total population. Hoover concluded that "the American Negro is not hoodwinked by these false messiahs." Even the House Committee on Un-American Activities has judged Negro support of communism to be "extremely limited and temporary." Labeling the N.A.A.C.P. "a non-Communist organization," the Com-

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mittee came to the conclusion, after protracted hearings, that "the vast majority of Americans of the Negro race have consistently resisted the blandishments and treacherous promises offered them by Communist conspirators."

Finally, the Communist-plot thesis ignores the nature of Negro protest. The fact that the colored man wants schools and gadgets and a gray flannel suit, far from indicating his subversiveness, is virtual proof of his Americanism. The Bill of Rights, not the Communist Manifesto, is the source of his ferment. The Communists' involvement in racial unrest constitutes plagiarism, not invention, because the Negro's struggle for full citizenship was part of the American scene long before the Communist party was conceived. Not even the Russians would claim to have invented American equalitarianism.

In view of these facts, how can reasonable men bring themselves to believe that racial friction is something the Communists dreamed up? Why is there such receptiveness to the suggestion that current agitation for desegregation is all part of a grand left-wing conspiracy? For the linkage of the N.A.A.C.P. with communism to make sense, it must be shown to serve some deep and compelling need.

What is this need? The answer is relatively simple. The Red-tagging of Negro protest fills a gaping hole in Southern logic. It purports to rescue a cherished Southern axiom from the reaches of cold fact. The white Southerner has long insisted that he *understands* Deep-South colored folk and *knows* them to be happy with their lot. Now he is confronted on every side with demands, by Negroes themselves, that the basic pattern of Southern life be changed. But if Negroes are happy as they are, why are they protesting? Here there appears an embarrassing break in the Southerner's chain of reasoning. Communism supplies the missing link. If the white South Carolinian, for example, can bring himself to believe that it was the Reds who "stirred our niggras up," he can take care of the obvious *non sequitur* which the facts of Negro protest present to the fantasy of his cherished axiom. He can still delude himself, in spite of patent and widespread Negro agitation for reform, that he

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understands the *real* heart of colored men and knows that they *would have been* content with their traditional place had they not, childlike, been led astray by a left-wing Pied Piper.

The ordinary Southerner likes to think that he has done the best he could for his colored folk and that they, at heart, are not only basically satisfied with things as they are, but deeply grateful for better schools and other improvements which many reactionary Southern whites now fancy themselves as having willingly handed out in recent years. To admit that Negro protest is home-grown and home-inspired would spoil the picture, forcing to the surface a submerged feeling of guilt. Herein lies an explanation of the big play which statements by conservative Negroes have recently received in the Southern press. Typical is the piece by a colored minister from Kingstree, South Carolina. It suggests that the Southern white man is the best friend the colored race ever had; it castigates the N.A.A.C.P. as a troublemaker; it denounces integration as something the *real* Black Belt Negro does not want anyway. If someone challenges the last point with overwhelming factual evidence to the contrary, the segregationist can always withdraw into a definition of *real* Black Belt Negroes as those who do not want integration.

Because such Negro spokesmen tell the white Southerner what he wants to hear, their statements are widely featured in small-town and metropolitan dailies. In the old days, the only way a colored man could break into the columns of the white press was by violating the mores and taboos of Southern life; now all he has to do is announce his intention to uphold them.

Not only does the white Southerner, using his unusual powers of perception, know that Negroes are happy and grateful; it has also been revealed to him that they are incapable of leading a protest movement anyway. The average white person from the farms and small towns still thinks of Negroes as inherently inferior and therefore congenitally unsuited to responsible behavior on their own. To be sure, he reads about Ralph Bunche and Marian Anderson, and at one level of his thinking he perceives that they must be intelligent and cultured persons; at another level, however, he suspects that such individuals are freaks—if not, indeed, the creatures

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of Northern propaganda. He himself has never seen a sophisticated Negro. He knows, with part of his mind, that Harvard and Cornell turn out Negro doctors and lawyers; but his own contact with what he calls "the educated ones" has been confined to the products of third- and fourth-rate colored colleges. Some Negro farmers' sons go off to one of the little segregated institutes that dot the Black Belt, and come home stiltedly saying "pres*ident*" and "treat*ment*." These are the people who form the basis of the rural Southerner's conception of educated Negroes. He knows that *they* could not provide the high quality of leadership that has characterized Negro protest movements. There must be some guiding white hand behind it all. The fact that a number of N.A.A.C.P. officials are obviously of mixed blood might go part of the way toward solving the riddle. A really satisfactory answer, however, requires one-hundred-per-cent-Caucasian masterminding. How else can be explained the orderly, effective tactics of, say, the Montgomery bus strikers, or those brilliant briefs which N.A.A.C.P. lawyer Thurgood Marshall presents to the Supreme Court?

And what kind of white people would stoop to this? Why, Communists, of course—or cynical, Red-tainted, Northern politicians ready to sell their souls for the Negro vote.

The kind of Southerner being discussed here finds the Communist-plot thesis attractive because it helps explain away the gap between what he says and what he sees. Not that inconsistency per se troubles him. Many of his beliefs are inconsistent. In this particular case, however, the factual evidence strikes at the most sacred of all Southern premises. The contention that he alone understands Negroes and knows what they really want forms the foundation stone for an imposing philosophical structure which the white Southerner has erected to rationalize his way of life. The key argument for the defense has always been that outsiders "don't understand us or our niggras." Most Northerners go along with desegregation, it is assumed, because "they don't know what we're up against down here." The suggestion that Earl Warren might know more of what is in the Southern Negro's heart than does Herman Talmadge cannot even be discussed. Only the Southern-born, South-

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ern-bred white can wisely decide what is good for the South and the colored man. If this foundation premise is allowed to fall, the whole Southern position collapses.

The Alabamian or Mississippian grasps at the Communist-plot thesis to span the breach between his basic premise and the cold fact of widespread Negro protest because it would be too painful for him to re-examine the premise itself. But how valid is the cherished axiom? How well, for example, does he actually know the Negro? For that matter, how well did he ever know this man who plowed his fields, served his table and reared his children?

Even in the days when almost every Southerner found himself intimately and functionally related to members of the other race, whites knew only that face of the black man which the black man turned for them to see. Today, increasing numbers of Southerners from both races find themselves caught up in the impersonality of urban life, in which they hardly know their own neighbors, let alone people who live at the other end of the city. The old lines of communication are breaking down. Higher wages and better job opportunities are taking Negroes out of white kitchens, even in the towns and villages, thereby reducing a primary source of contact from the past. In view of such changes, the white Southerner's insistence that he knows the Negro rests on even shakier ground than before. Far from understanding Negroes, he scarcely knows the minds of his own offspring, if one may judge from the way in which the enlightened statements of top student leaders at Georgia Tech, Chapel Hill—and even the University of Alabama—contrast with the old patterns of thought.

During the past two decades the South has experienced invasion on a scale undreamed of by Sherman. Encroaching industrialization has eaten at foundations that withstood the winds of 1864. Farm labor shortages and agricultural price supports have put television aerials on rural cabins. Higher earnings have filled the Negro cropper's stomach with new foods—canned fruit cocktail, salami and even beefsteak, in place of the old corn pone, fatback and molasses—just as the communication he has been able to buy with his increased income—radio, TV, movies and magazines—has filled his head with new ideas.

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Not long ago N.A.A.C.P. membership was virtually confined to the Negro middle classes in Atlanta and other large cities; the colored farm hand and his counterpart in the towns, isolated from the mainstream of American life, hardly knew such movements existed. Today, protest has spread to the rural districts. Applications for voting privileges and petitions for school integration are being filed in Selma, Alabama, and Elloree, South Carolina, by colored farmers, carpenters and janitors—the very kind of people the provincial white Southerner has always claimed to know so well.

On almost any other issue the words of J. Edgar Hoover and the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which refute the Communist-plot thesis, would carry great weight with the kind of Southerner discussed here. In this case, however, the words fall upon deaf ears. The provincial Southerner cannot afford to relinquish his convictions that the N.A.A.C.P. is a Communist front and that racial discontent is the work of the Reds. In a sense, the Communist-plot theory provides a psychological crutch for the paternalistic Southerner, to help him over the traumatic shock he has suffered on being confronted with evidence that Negroes do not love him unreservedly, that they do not unquestioningly accept him as he is.

The depth of his need to believe that the evidence is not true is measured by the kind of fallacies he is willing to swallow in order to espouse the Communist-plot thesis. The bridge he has chosen to erect over the gaping hole in his basic logical position is itself full of holes. Its framework is shaky; its treads worn thin. Yet he must stand like Horatius before its span. For if it falls, his peculiar powers of revelation fall with it; and without these powers he might have to stop being a Southerner on the race issue and become just another American.

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Suburban

PATRICIA HOOPER

Racing the great, green-gloved fire we reach
land at last and go hurrying off into ourselves
from which we came out of and go in again,
back to the white and obscure places called home.

And in our pockets bulging with love we carry
the trampled, renowned fountain, hurrying back again
and not caring for what was in the way.

There are so many things that we remember, and of course
the big-eyed bakery women who go staring after us,
looking out at the world under uncombed hair like
children; luckily we have enough courage to move on.

In our yesterday's heart or eye we see only the thin
editor of the *Times* under the too large hat
not quite ready for June and the loud schoolboys
who are incapable of speech and use signs,
motions, gestures; trying to make it all stick.

Now like ourselves which we call happy we sit down
under the blue and white yard umbrellas as if today
was not over; as if somehow suddenly all of the world smiled.

✪ PATRICIA HOOPER, who is sixteen years old and a student in the public schools of Saginaw, Michigan, has appeared previously in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and has two poems included in a new anthology to be published by New Directions.

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A View of Contemporary Poetry

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

THE KEY TO THE TRAGIC NATURE OF THINGS is the division into selves. Conscious being becomes possible only in a self, yet to be a self means to be capable of pain as well as pleasure, and brings with it the ultimate penalty of death. Moreover, the very fact of selfhood implies separation, implies a clash of interests. Just as two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same moment, so the desires, even the needs, of selves often collide. Suffering is, therefore, of the essence of being. The self is self-ish, and in its selfishness, so requisite for individual survival, is at odds with another, greater, multitudinous entity, the non-self. We find the primal expression of this dichotomy in the preying of life upon life, the biological necessity to which man, in common with many other animals, is subject. This conflict is further exemplified in the competitive struggle between men, whether in war or in so-called peace. Religion attempts to find a solution on the human level. Christianity, the religion of the West, finds the answer in the love which expresses itself in self-sacrifice. Christ on the Cross symbolizes, among other things, the reconciliation between self and non-self through a supreme act of self-sacrificing love. Love restores, in some measure, the unity broken by the division into selves.

But there is, apart from religion and the solution it offers, another area in which human selves are reconciled, in which the essential unity of man is revealed. Art—be it music, drama, painting, sculpture or poetry, a realm standing beyond and above the arena of the biological struggle—reveals it. For as the possibility of mere communication between men is of itself evidence of some underlying unity, so their capability of profound communion with one

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another and with the collective unconscious through a great work of art is proof of it. We have now reached a stage in history in which recognition of this oneness becomes imperative. Man's cleverness has finally caught up with him. It is a truism that survival now depends on something much greater than cleverness: upon mutual good will, charity and co-operation, upon complete and effective realization that we are one.

Of all the arts, poetry, partly because its medium is that of everyday communication, partly because of its ability to convey, however indirectly, definite thoughts and feelings, has perhaps stood closest to man and has been the most intimately expressive of his spiritual condition at any given time. With this in mind, it is interesting to examine some of the characteristics of poetry in the English-speaking countries during the past half century, a period among the most violent and tragic in history, and yet a period of amazing material progress and scientific achievement.

Whatever the "true tradition" in the poetry of the English-speaking peoples may be, whether it is in the line of those developments that reached their climax in the Romantic movement, as claimed by Herbert Read, or in the line of the Metaphysicals and the Augustans, as generally believed by most contemporary critics, or whether, as Kathleen Raine has asserted, it comes down to us through Spenser, Milton, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Yeats, one thing is certain: During the first two decades of the twentieth century, poetry took a direction sharply divergent from that of its immediate past. The work of Mr. Pound and Mr. Eliot, in criticism and in poetry, marked the beginning of a revolution in both fields, the influence of which was to be paramount during the rest of the half century. And whether or not the new direction taken was a desirable one or in the line of the "true tradition," there is little question but that no amount of critical acumen could have foreseen or critical exhortation have changed it. Mr. Pound and Mr. Eliot, men of genius, through whose work French literature became once more the dominant influence in English poetry, were the voices of a point of view and a state of mind which had long been evolving and which were destined, under the pressures of the coming decades, to evolve still further in the same manner.

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In any period, of course, there are poets who are not representative of their time and who will constitute exceptions to any generalization made about it. Without regard to these, what may be described as the main characteristics distinguishing the poetry of the past fifty years from that which preceded it? One thinks first, obviously, of the shift in tone and attitude which mark the break with the Romantic movement, of the rediscovery of Donne, with all his intricacies and complexities, and of the reaction against the virtues of such poets as Milton, Wordsworth and Shelley. Looking more closely at the poems most representative of the period, one becomes aware of to how large an extent perception has taken the place of emotion,[1] how much exact observation and description there is and how little of the search for meaning—meaning which might have been derived from a synthesis of the isolated particulars so exactly observed and described. The point of view and the method are often those of science—analytic, precise, emotionally uninvolved. And the poem has grown more accurate and more learned,[2] sometimes to a point where the unraveling of allusions, references, and even of a private system of reference, has become the chief element of interest to many readers.[3]

In his *Articulate Energy: An Inquiry into the Syntax of English Poetry*, Donald Davie discovers throughout the poetry of our day syntactical parallels to some of these characteristics. Much of the poetry of our time, he says, can be described as a poetry syntactically "invertebrate." And, certainly, it often is "a poetry . . . of vivid particularizations, of abrupt transitions, of ellipses, of interrelations left implicit. . . . *The Waste Land* (or at least the end of it) and Mr. Ezra Pound's *Cantos* are poems which evoke vivid and precise isolated images, and on the whole leave it to the reader to establish connexions between these."[4] This kind of syntactical structure,

[1] As Elizabeth Jennings has written in a poem dealing with the post-Bomb generation's apparent inability to express feeling: "We only move it through the mind. . ./ Perhaps the deeper tragedy/ Is then the inability/ To change a thought into emotion."

[2] There is a taste for oddities, for abstruse data, from natural history and elsewhere, such as that the shark is the only fish which has eyelids, that snakes do not perspire, et cetera.

[3] A certain *snobisme* is sometimes involved in this. The overlearned, overexquisitely cultivated poet runs the risk, as one wit has put it, of condemning himself to a life-term of solitary refinement.

[4] "The Poetic Skeleton" (a review of Dr. Davie's *Articulate Energy*), *Times Literary Supplement*, November 4, 1955.

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the exact opposite of that to be found in the poetry of Milton, for instance, accounts for the absence in most contemporary verse of an over-all music, the flow of linked cadences long drawn out, with their rise and fall, their unresolved harmonies and suspended closes. For, as Suzanne Langer points out in her *Feeling and Form*, it is as music, rather than as language, that poetry is held together by syntax. The music, then, of much modern poetry is necessarily of a different order—disjointed, episodic and staccato, as is much modern music itself.

The characteristics touched upon as among those which are representative of the poetry of the past fifty years express the temper and mood of a period during which science has undermined many so-called truths, many cherished beliefs. The discoveries of Einstein and the physicists, no less than the theories of Freud and Jung, were fascinating but unsettling. Upheavals and disruptions on a world scale still further heightened the general bewilderment and disillusion. In the state of shock which followed these and their revelation of the brute potentialities in human nature, the ideas of progress, of the perfectibility of man, of his innate goodness, suffered setbacks. There was a return to the psychology of the Middle Ages, to the concepts of original sin and otherworldly salvation. In poetry, the exhaustion consequent upon a surfeit of feeling was registered in a profound mistrust of feeling itself (unless masked as wit), in a cynical revulsion against the "pretense" of sentiment, and in a hearty dislike of the "grandiose" and harmonious verbal music of the Victorians. A bitter but "honest" dissonance was now preferred. In the same way, the skepticism engendered by the collapse of familiar ideals and ideologies expressed itself in a mistrust of all meaning. The poetic impulse rested, and took refuge in accurate, objective recording of the report of the senses, unvitiated by emotion or reflection. The awareness of totality was lost.

Throughout this period, which embraced two world wars and a major depression, the poem, as practiced by the English-speaking peoples, showed, nevertheless, an extraordinary creativity and versatility. While originality in the arts customarily rests upon the nuances which distinguish one individual from another, rather than upon drastic formal innovation, the poetry of the past half

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century has, undeniably, been enriched by radical experimentation and the development of complex new techniques and devices. The scrapping of rhetoric,[5] the return to everyday speech, the banning of easy solutions, must be counted among the blessings of a period less interested in the beautiful than in the true, a period in which poetry, if it was to take in the modern scene at all, was obliged, as Mr. Eliot said, although in another context, "to carry the burdens and exhibit the subtleties of prose."

The cult of sensory reportage, whereby impressions are recorded without their emotional attributes and without any effort to give them a meaning which synthesis and interpretation might yield, this unawareness of totality, is partly responsible, no doubt, for the obscurity of a certain kind of contemporary verse. The breakdown of shared systems of reference and the substitution of private ones and even of private semantics, not to mention the taking for granted, in the reader, of an erudition he does not possess—these are further contributory causes of what has humorously been termed "cross-word-puzzle poetry."[6] It must be admitted that the reading of much of the verse of our time is a task rather than a joy—a labor to be rewarded, perhaps, after long effort and soul-searching, by a sort of delayed enlightenment which, supposedly, more than makes up for all the toil and tedium involved. That this is as it should be, where "serious" poetry is concerned, is the position probably taken by a very considerable number of "serious" readers today. This somewhat awe-struck attitude is revealed in the following excerpt from a review by a well-known critic and writer on poetry: ". . . both the writing and the reading of it involve . . . a kind of exalted drudgery. Its rewards crystallize slowly, like those of a long and painful analysis; sometimes we hardly recognize them as such at all. The solitary effort that a good poem asks, so often without conferring a conscious pleasure . . ."[7] and so on.

Here we come upon one of the chief characteristics of the poem

[5] Although rhetoric in the hands of an inspired poet can be magnificent, as in the case of Dylan Thomas, who came into this world bringing all his adjectives with him.

[6] One is comforted with regard to it by remembering a passage from *Alice in Wonderland*: " 'If there's no meaning in it,' said the King, 'that saves a world of trouble, you know, as we needn't try to find any.' "

[7] Bette Richart, reviewing Edwin Muir's *One Foot in Eden*, in the *Commonweal* of August 3, 1956.

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in a period even more troubled than most: the absence of the delight normally associated with the experience of poetry. This is not to say that delight represents all that is to be derived from this experience or that a poem of the first order is going to yield its secrets to any but a qualified reader willing to bring to it the humility and the surrender which any complex work of art demands. But, whatever else a poem may be, it should be enjoyable. "This must console . . . those who had begun to doubt the wisdom of their own habit of not bothering to read a poet who bored them."[8]

The truly obscure poem—that is to say, the poem not easily susceptible of apprehension, much less of comprehension—makes for hard reading and difficult understanding. Yet as enjoyment is one of the avenues that lead to understanding, so understanding is one of the components essential to enjoyment. Mr. Eliot, in his lecture, "The Frontiers of Criticism," delivered on April 30, 1956, at the University of Minnesota—a lecture on the New Criticism, in which the importance of enjoyment as against mere explication is emphasized[9]—has summed it up succinctly when he says: "I do not think of enjoyment and understanding as distinct activities—one emotional and the other intellectual. . . . It is certain that we do not fully enjoy a poem unless we understand it; and, on the other hand, it is equally true that we do not fully understand a poem unless we enjoy it."

Meaning that escapes analysis—and every true poem is a bit of magic, much of which escapes analysis—is experienced unconsciously through enjoyment. Some of us may not agree with Dryden that the chief, if not the only, end of poetry is to delight. All of us will probably agree that the delight it gives us, in the course of giving us other things, is one of its chief virtues. Delight is a means to revelation, and accompanies it.

Our day is a day of judgment. Man has been brought face to face, at last, with "the unpersuadable justice." Of the choices open

[8] Anthony Cronin, "A Massacre of Authors," *Encounter*, April, 1956.

[9] May not the present dearth in the United States of oncoming scientists, technicians and engineers be accounted for by the large number of young men who write for the learned quarterlies those essays in which a poem is taken apart like a machine or analyzed as if it were the contents of a test tube—spiritual descendants, perhaps, of Hudson Maxim, the inventor, who published in 1910 *The Science of Poetry and Philosophy of Language*?

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to him, only one is compatible with survival. He must make that choice or perish. Perhaps that choice will be made, and our growing human solidarity and hope will be reflected in poems into which the element of delight has come back once more. Then the important gains achieved by experimentation will be consolidated throughout an era of "rational conservatism," dissociation of sensibility will give way to a reassociation, fission to fusion, the broken music to a greater harmony consonant with the harmony of a new world. The forces that could bring such a world into being are already, however precariously, at work. There are premonitions of it in the literature of the oncoming generation. A return to lyricism, to a lyrical romanticism, is noticeable in the poetry of England, France, Italy and Germany, as well as among the younger American poets. Possibly there is, as Edwin Muir says, "a permanent substance of poetry, a traditional poetic method . . . which, even after the most violent disturbances, tend to re-establish themselves."

In the meantime, everything waits upon the hour that shall mark the final, complete realization, translated into practical terms, of the unity of mankind—the absolute necessity for mutual give-and-take, yes, even for mutual self-sacrifice. In that hour, should it come, the poem, "exacting the beautiful from the good" (to use Richard Wilbur's phrase), will play its part in reconciling our warring selves, in recalling to men—oh, not in so many words—that they are one.

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Intellectuals and Ballplayers

ROGER KAHN

THE ROMANCE BETWEEN INTELLECTUALS and the game of baseball is, for the most part, one-sided to the point of absurdity. A large percentage of intelligent Americans evaluate the four hundred men who play major baseball as awesomely gifted demigods. A large percentage of the muscular four hundred rate intellectuals several notches below umpires.

Neither point of view is necessarily conscious, of course, but the unconscious, as they say in the trade, will out. Occasionally intellectuals considering baseball retreat behind cultivated cynicism which ranges in phrase from the stock remark about bread and circuses to more dignified indictments of false values and commercialism. Similarly, some ballplayers, whose closest contact with printed matter occurs when they run their hands across the photographs in *Playboy*, swiftly protest, "I know all about that reading stuff." Both these false fronts are wholly transparent to the practiced eye.

During a five-year term I served covering major league baseball for a newspaper in New York, both my eyes were given plenty of practice. As social evenings wore on, the guest who had first pointedly skirted a discussion of Mickey Mantle's swing to analyze the late Beethoven quartets ("so vague, so illusory, yet so magnificent") would usually come a complete cycle, and ask at midnight, "How does Mickey do it? I mean is it in his wrists or is it just plain brawn?" Far more common and far more enjoyable was the unaffected egghead who avoided the whole complexity of a façade. Simply and directly, he would begin, "What's Leo Durocher really like?" or "How do you hold a slider?" or "Is there any chance of the old bent-leg slide coming back?"

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Bright ladies generally steer clear of such technical discussions, but that is not to say they give baseball much berth. One woman who applied herself brilliantly to interpreting Wallace Stevens and somewhat less successfully to illustrating his work in nonrepresentational painting, returned from her first baseball game in many years with a series of representational sketches of Stan Musial, a graceful man with sloping shoulders who has been among the game's outstanding batters for fifteen years.

"What's this?" someone remarked in surprise when he was shown the Musial sketches. "The last time we talked you said you were going to paint the poem about the blackbird."

"I know," the lady said, "but I had to try my hand at sketching this man. He moves so beautifully."

Ballplayers generally are negative about painting, but written words and men who write, they agree, are things to be approached carefully, like land mines. Better still, they are not approached at all. This situation is entirely logical.

The ballplayer's first postschool contact with the printed word ordinarily comes through the sports columns of a newspaper. All is well when the player is successful, but as soon as he makes an important error or strikes out at a critical time, there is a headline, an article, a box score and possibly a feature story documenting and publicizing his failure. Even assuming a thoroughly happy school experience with books, something rather rare among athletes who can easily find greater success outside the classroom, sports page reading in itself can be traumatic. Baseball writers and baseball players have a relationship which resembles that of teacher and pupil, or surgeon and patient, or Ben Gurion and Nasser.

One veteran baseball writer on the *New York Times* suffered a painful back injury while covering the Yankees twenty-five years ago and still remembers what happened after he limped into the trainer's room in the clubhouse deep underneath the grandstands at Yankee Stadium. No less a figure than Lou Gehrig walked in as the trainer was laboring over the reporter.

"Writer?" Gehrig asked, pointing to the tortured figure.

"Uh huh," said the trainer. "Yup."

"Good," Gehrig said, quite seriously.

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It is not really a long jump for a ballplayer to go from a *Times* reporter to Tolstoy, Yeats or Marcus Aurelius. They all write, don't they, or they all wrote? Well, wouldn't it be just as well if all their backs were broken so they'd stop taking all those swipes at ballplayers? Joe Trimble of the *New York Daily News,* who wrote of an awkward Yankee first baseman named Nick Etten when he signed an $18,500 contract, "the $500 is for his fielding," was chased through a train by Etten and escaped only by locking himself inside a ladies' rest room which, fortunately, was unoccupied for the moment. Try telling Etten that Tolstoy and Trimble are different kinds of writers and you would be pushed headlong over your nuance.

One ballplayer, Pee Wee Reese of the Brooklyn Dodgers, enjoys reading so that he wisely ignores the sports pages whenever the Dodgers lose. "If I don't see what they write about us when we get beat," he says, "I figure I'm that much ahead." As a result, Reese has few unpleasant associations with the act of reading.

Another Dodger, a pitcher named Carl Erskine, is well-versed in Kipling and Robert W. Service. He even eased a trying descent through fog one night by reciting the entire "Cremation of Sam McGee" loudly and clearly over the rumbling and creaking of what I then believed to be a doomed DC-4.

Still another pitcher, Mal Mallette, who had unsuccessful trials with both the Dodgers and the Yankees, became spellbound during the summer he played for Asheville by the lore and legend which surround Thomas Wolfe. The next winter Mallette began to write a bit himself; and soon afterward, when his pitching arm went bad, he switched to journalism. Mallette is now a successful sports editor, fittingly enough, in Asheville.

These instances, sadly, are exceptional. I have it on excellent authority that the first book Mickey Mantle ever finished reading was his own ghosted autobiography. "Not started," my source carefully explains, "just finished."

Perhaps the entire case of baseball men *vs.* the written word comes down to a single incident involving Charlie Dressen, the sincere, ineloquent former manager of the Washington Senators. Gesturing at a copy of *Crime and Punishment* a young sports-

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writer had accidentally carried into the dugout, Dressen asked immediately, "What's that?"

"Huh?" the reporter said. "Oh, that—that's a book."

"I know," Dressen said. "But what kind of a book?"

"A novel. A tragic kind of a novel."

Dressen, who was then over fifty, nodded, dropped his guard and said almost regretfully, "You know I never read a book in my whole life."

"You ought to," the reporter said too eagerly. "It would help you make speeches and things like that."

"Nah," Dressen said, closing the discussion, "I've got by pretty good up to now without books. I ain't gonna start making changes."

From the grandstand or, more significantly, on a twenty-one-inch television screen, the attitude of a baseball player toward a book and the whole process of thought it implies is undetectable. Nor is it even germane. How does he move? Does the curve ball bother him? Can he throw? These are the only relevant questions. Any sensitive intellectual moved by the majesty of a Ted Williams home run is bound to be disturbed that the Williams he meets is not a man to match the deed, but an egocentric emotionalist who seems most of all to need a good spanking.

But Williams' personality has no more to do with his home runs than Wagner's personal habits had to do with Siegfried. From even the best box seat, the petulance and ignorance that Ring Lardner noted inside dugouts subside to less than sound and fury. If it were possible they would also signify less than nothing. I don't think the intellectual spectator should be troubled by the private attitudes of ballplayers, and fortunately I don't believe that he is.

But the lure is not a negative thing. The attractiveness of baseball is not measured by things overlooked any more than its existence has come to pass by accident. The appeal was dampened for me only slightly by five years of covering games from March to October. If Williams was a pill and Jackie Robinson had never heard of Alan Paton when that estimable author unexpectedly arrived for an interview, then there was one massive consolation. There is severe classic tragedy within major league baseball; tragedy which catches and manipulates the life of every athlete as

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surely as forces beyond the heaths manipulated Hardy's simple Wessex folk into creatures of imposing stature.

Major league baseball is an insecure society: it pays lavish salaries to athletes and then, when the men reach thirty-five or so, it abruptly stops paying them anything. But the tragedy goes considerably deeper than that. Briefly, it is the tragedy of fulfillment.

Each major leaguer, like his friends, wanted desperately to become a major leaguer years ago. Whenever there was trouble at home or in school or with a girl, there was the sure escape of baseball; not the stumbling, ungainly escape of the ordinary ballplayer, but a sudden, wondrous metamorphosis into the role of hero. For each major leaguer was a star in his neighborhood or in his town years ago, and each lived with the unending solace that there was one thing he could always do with grace and skill and poise. Somehow, he believed once with the most profound faith he possessed, if he ever did make the major leagues, everything would then become ideal.

A major league baseball team is a collection of twenty-five youngish men who have made the major leagues and discovered that in spite of it, life remains distressingly short of ideal. A bad knee still throbs before a rainstorm. Too much beer still makes for an unpleasant fullness. Girls still insist on tiresome preliminaries. And now there is a wife who gets headaches or a baby who has colic. No, despite the autograph hunters, things are a long way from ideal. In retrospect, they may have been better years ago, when the dream was happily simple and vague. Among the twenty-five youngish men of a ball club who individually shared a common dream which now has come to be fulfilled, cynicism and disillusion are common as grass. So Willie Mays angrily announces that he will henceforth charge $500 to be interviewed, and Duke Snider shifts his dream-site from a ball park to an avocado farm that looks over the Pacific, and Pee Wee Reese tries to fight off a momentary depression by saying: "Sure I dreamt about baseball when I was a kid, but not the night games. No sir. I did not dream about the lights."

For most men the business of shifting and reworking dreams comes late in life, when there are older children upon whose un-

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willing shoulders the tired dreams may be deposited. It is a harsh, jarring thing to have to shift dreams at thirty, and if there is ever to be a major novel written about baseball, I think it will have to come to grips with this theme.

The imaginative intellectual whose legs go bad when he is twenty-two is obviously more fortunate than he knows. His dream, the one in which he strikes out Williams, Mantle and the boss on nine pitches, employing the secret backspin slider that breaks two ways before reaching the catcher, is good for the rest of his life. If it dims at any time he has only to visit a ball park for a recharge.

By its nature, the watching of baseball appeals most strongly to imaginative people. The average major league game lasts approximately two hours and forty-five minutes. There is action for perhaps fifteen minutes of that time. The rest is either inaction or suspense, depending on imagination and point of view.

The pitcher throws, the batter looks, the umpire says, "Strike," and the game is on. The batter steps quickly out of the batter's box, knocks his bat against his shoe spikes to loosen what little dirt has become lodged there. From a good seat, or on a large screen, it is possible to see his lips move as he mutters something toward the umpire. What did he say? Possibly, "One-thirty is a helluvan early time to start a game, ain't it Charley?" The umpire shakes his head. "Hell, I wish I had your money," he says. "I wouldn't complain about nothing." Then it is time for another pitch, but if the imaginative man chooses to believe so, there is already a small feud flaring between the umpire and the batter. Didn't the batter mutter? Didn't the umpire shake his head? "Come on," our imaginative man demands of the umpire, "call them right."

By the time the eighth inning arrives, the visiting team is one run ahead, but the home club starts an interesting rally. The leadoff man lines a clean single to right, the next man doubles off the center-field wall, sending the runner to third, and now the home club's toughest man marches up to bat. The catcher flashes a sign, and the pitcher shakes his head violently. The catcher tries another sign. Again the pitcher shakes his head. When it happens a third time, the imaginative spectator remembers an anecdote from the vast store of baseball stories he has read.

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"He doesn't want to pitch to him," the spectator remarks. "It's like the time in '37 when Lefty Gomez was pitching to Jimmy Foxx and the catcher ran through every sign he had and still Gomez was shaking his head. So the catcher charged out to the mound and Gomez said, 'Hell, I just don't want to throw this guy *anything*.' "

The imaginative man has had time to tell this anecdote which, with other names, may date from either the early Bill Stern or late Abner Doubleday era, because the game itself now comes to a new standstill. The visiting manager has called time out so that he can walk to the pitcher's mound and discuss matters with the pitcher, catcher, plus an unwanted fourth hand, the veteran shortstop who, to the manager's continuing annoyance, invariably seems to have managerial theories of his own. Before leaving the dugout, the manager probably placed his right hand to his left ear lobe, a signal which directly ordered the pitcher to "Shake him off for a while so we can give the relief pitcher more time to warm up." This signal was given too quickly to be noticed by anyone but the pitcher. Consequently it did not interfere with the Gomez anecdote.

As the four worried men talk intensely, the imaginative fan again can only guess at the dialogue. Actually, the manager opens with sarcasm: "Well, that was a great nothing ball you just threw."

"You come all the way out here to tell me that?" the pitcher says.

"Is he tired?" the manager asks the catcher.

The pitcher glares at the catcher, who then shrugs.

"He's tired," says the shortstop. "Didn't you see the way he. . ."

"I didn't ask you," the manager says. "Is he tired?"

"He threw that last guy a nothing ball," the catcher says, cautiously.

"Okay," says the manager. "Stick a fork in him. He's done." The manager waves to the bullpen, and a new pitcher begins a long walk into the game.

Ten minutes later, when the game resumes, the imaginative fan has thought of two further anecdotes and, in addition, has come to a personal conclusion. "If I'd had someone like that manager to give me pitching tips," he thinks, "I might have been out there myself."

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The batter hits the relief pitcher's third pitch into the left-field grandstand, and the imaginative fan, once again identifying with the home team, jumps triumphantly to his feet, slaps a stranger on the back, and glows until dinner, when his wife asks why he had not taken her and the baby or, better yet, devoted some time to doing what his family wants for a change and gone rowing in the park. The imaginative man can offer no good answer. If he is wise, he does not try.

Football is violence and cold weather and sex and college rye. Horse racing is animated roulette. Boxing is smoky halls and kidneys battered until they bleed. Tennis and golf are best played, not watched. Basketball, hockey and track meets are action heaped upon action, climax upon climax, until the onlooker's responses become deadened.

Baseball is for the leisurely afternoons of summer and for the unchanging dreams. I do not suggest that major league baseball can take the place of the late Beethoven quartets, merely that the two frequently coexist in harmony within the thoughts of the American intellectual. I think this is in no way incongruous. The one came out of a life that was like thunder; the other cost four hundred men their dreams.

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Portrait

Guy Stanton Ford

DEAN ALBERTSON

"Yes, I am a Midwesterner! I proclaim it from the treetops!"

His face, graciously bearing the marks of eighty-four years, still sparkles with the wit and incisive humor which have illumined his days. The hands, which as a boy held a plow that broke the virgin sod of Iowa and, fifty years later, held the seal of the presidency of the University of Minnesota, tamp the tobacco into his pipe with sure, steady strokes. Muted by the trees of Washington's Rock Creek Park, the sound of the capital's Connecticut Avenue traffic seems distant. One can hear the sound of many clocks in the high-ceilinged apartment, their chimes mingling with the clang of pipe on ash tray as he talks. Books and memorabilia jostle stacks of current periodicals and applications for several kinds of scholarships. The voice is one of immense dignity and serenity as Guy Stanton Ford speaks of the past.

"I don't feel old, not in the slightest. Every spring I wish I could get on a pair of spiked shoes and a glove and play some baseball or go out and play golf. In these later years I have consciously guarded against getting rigidities of opinion. I try to catch myself and avoid getting an old man's view of things. I never was one of those people who believe in the good old days. There is no such thing. You go back to the good old times they talk about, and there you find people yelling their heads off about the good times farther back. And then you get clear back to the Garden of Eden, of course, and there you've got Adam and Eve, looking back with regret at the good old times!"

Born on May 9, 1873, at Liberty Corners, Kenosha County, Wisconsin, Ford grew to manhood in a thoroughly rural Midwestern environment. After a series of moves, Ford's father, a country doctor, settled his wife and two sons in Plainfield, Iowa. The name, Ford says, was onomatopoeic, the town being no more than the name might convey—a main street, a railroad, two churches (Methodist and Baptist) and a rich farming community. It was a frontier which bestowed both blessings and restrictions.

"We used to have a boy's baseball team in Plainfield. We used to drive in a lumber wagon from town to town and play baseball. We'd put on our cotton pants on the outskirts of town and enter in all the glory of our uniforms!"

His memory brushes back over the rich heritage of a young and lusty America. It recalls an earlier year with an uncle in a log cabin in western Iowa. "There was a certain imaginative element in mounting a horse and riding to the town over that unbroken prairie on roads that were just tracks cut in the sod. Perhaps I did not have this feeling in the full phrasing that I give it now, but I remember the sense of seeing a town built up on a railroad that was pushing out."

And there were the restrictions: "I'm definitely conscious of what I might have been if at twelve years of age, when I had mastered the common branches backward and forward, I could have entered some good school—when I could have read anything at all, and didn't have a library to get at

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Mr. Albertson has taught at the University of California and New York University. He is currently completing a biography of Claude R. Wickard.

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or anything of the sort. Think of the things I could have done! The things I've had to make up for!"

Ford leans forward in his chair and his hand goes up in that swift impromptu gesture which is so much a part of him. One is aware of the same quick mind and insatiable craving for knowledge which took him through easy accomplishment of his elementary schooling to an Iowa teacher's certificate at the age of twelve, then through a series of teaching positions in rural schools, until, at seventeen, he found himself once more as a student entombed in the barren curriculum of an Iowa parochial school. Hopelessly unsatisfied with an institution in which the textbook was king and fundamentalist revivals siphoned off intellectual energies, Ford decided to leave for Madison, Wisconsin.

The year was 1892 and the University of Wisconsin faculty was studded with the luminaries of the academic world—Richard T. Ely, David Kinley, Paul Reinsch, Charles H. Haskins and Frederick Jackson Turner—great teachers who argued with the texts, addressed themselves to the problem of "the good society," and condoned a balance of books and baseball. Ford knew he had found his milieu when he heard in President Charles K. Adams' inaugural address the rolling phrase, "A university is a place where university work is done." Ford translated this aphorism four decades later in paying tribute to Willis Mason West when he said of him: "In the university he kept alive the tradition that is of the essence of a university, that it is the home and last refuge, not of learning alone, but of free men thinking freely."

After graduation, Ford became a teacher in the public schools of Wisconsin Rapids. Just as the University of Wisconsin was the beginning of his intellectual maturity, this was the beginning of a distinguished career in administration—the Ford brand of administration—culminating in a moment of early triumph. "At the end of the winter term when I went home for Christmas, the boys and girls of this school, which I had just taken charge of three months before, came down to the train to cheer and send me off—when I would be back in ten days or twelve!" His hands run lightly over the books on the table beside him while his mind pauses on the memory. "I felt that that was an achievement. I had gone into a school that was supposed to be disorderly and that had been antagonistic to a previous principal and assistant, and brought order into it. I had started a football team. Everybody said I'd lose control—going out and letting those boys pummel me—and yet I gained their respect—youngsters, don't you see, who were pretty keen. I really would think my most triumphant moment was that. Much more so than when the university senate cheered me when I walked down to take the presiding chair that first time after I was elected president at Minnesota. That was another one of course. There again was the confidence of your colleagues—of people closest to you, people who were the keenest to judge. But I'd rate the time with those high school youngsters first!" There was a moment's silence. "Thereafter," he said quietly, "I don't think I ever had any feeling that I couldn't do any job that came to me."

Completing his teaching contract with the Wisconsin Public Schools and a graduate year at Wisconsin with Turner and Haskins in 1899, Ford went to Germany for a year to complete the research on *Hanover and Prussia*, the book which was to serve as his doctoral dissertation at Columbia University. "Where would you go in 1900 in the United States for modern European history? Nowhere. There was really nothing at Columbia. There was William M. Sloane, who wrote the four big volumes on Napoleon of which a smart-alecky reviewer on the *New York Sun* said: 'Mr. Sloane has written a life of Napoleon. It weighs ten pounds.'" And there was the unnamed Columbia history professor who, according to Ford, "was so dull that the dust just flew out of your ears when he lectured."

His Columbia course work completed in 1901, Ford took a job as instructor in history at Yale University. For almost five years he struggled his sections of sophomores through a survey course in European history. He was discouraged by student preoccupation with campus social life, stultified by faculty meetings which dealt primarily with adolescent

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misdemeanors, and despondent in the opinion that Yale was "an institution in which you would be just a fly on the wheel that turned slowly." Midway in his fifth year, Ford's health broke, and he spent the balance of the term recovering in Florida and the West.

He thinks now, sometimes, about the Yale experience, examining almost diffidently what he considers to be the closest he ever came to his "bath of fire." His reasoning is that of a dedicated teacher. "I don't think the students had any feeling about me. The faculty to them was, on the whole, a hostile body which tried to flunk them. I'm sure the students didn't think I was a bad teacher —they may even have thought I was a good one. But I didn't get this response." Then he adds, "Ambition, too. Yes indeed. Couldn't make a dent on a place like that!"

Then came an offer from the University of Illinois of a full professorship. "The Yale experience convinced me that the future belonged to the state universities, and I was a Midwesterner." Ford accepted with alacrity, returning to the comfortable atmosphere of the prairie culture and to a vigorous, young school where he could "expand." And the beginning of all his plans for the future was in Grace Ellis, a sprightly, diminutive girl from Bristol, Wisconsin, whom he had met six years before. Ford glances across the room to where she sits, swinging her feet a little in a too-tall chair, and his thoughts go back to Bristol. "Mrs. Ellis and Grace came out and stood on the horse block and talked to me there." Grace Ford nods. "We were married there on the farm at Bristol on September 6, 1907, just a few feet from where we met. It was," she says softly, "a lovely day."

During his seven years at Urbana, while he served as professor of history and chairman of the library committee, Ford was pulled steadily toward academic administration. In 1913, President George E. Vincent of the University of Minnesota summoned Ford to Chicago to discuss the possibility of Ford's becoming dean of the Minnesota Graduate School. "I arrived early enough so that we had breakfast together. I had the habit of smoking a cigar after breakfast, but President Vincent didn't say anything about smoking. No cigar. After what seemed to be hours he asked me if I smoked. I told him I did, and lit my cigar. I said, 'Mr. President, you don't know how near you came to losing a possible dean of the graduate school.' "

Twenty-five years later, the University of Minnesota faculty shattered the august dignity of the occasion to cheer as their new president, the now white-haired Dr. Guy Stanton Ford, strode through their standing ranks to take his place in the presiding chair.

Ford shifts a little impatiently in his chair in response to a series of obvious questions. "All this is very difficult for me to do, all this self-analysis. I've never gone grubbing around inside of myself. I haven't been interested in it. I have just taken things in my stride, and moved from one thing to another, without backward glances or regrets, just turned to the new job, task or problem. I won't say that I let that be sufficient for the day, because not always the past but the future has got to be in your mind. As a historian, of course, I can't neglect the past. I think it's a good thing to be a historian to help you to do this."

Writing in 1921 of Baron vom Stein, Ford unconsciously provided a truly deft portrait of himself. "With some men," he said of Stein, "the biographer finds his task in the nice distinction of the crises which show the development of his character. Not so with Stein. What he is as a boy, he is as a man—proud, aggressive, quick in judgment, and tirelessly energetic in execution, self-contained and self-dependent, profoundly moral in life and in his attitude toward all questions. But this Stein, the man, is effaced by Stein the public servant. The periods in Stein's life around which the account of his career may be grouped chapter by chapter are begun and ended by some change in his official status or some wider opportunity of public service. These are almost the sole indications of transition or evolution. The work is himself, and his personal utterances relate to what he is doing and not to what he is thinking of himself as the doer of public tasks."

To list Ford's many achievements would be to trace one of the most brilliant academic careers in modern America. As a teacher, he has inspired many thousands of

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students to an interest in history and in the exciting process of learning. As a historian, he has given to the world two works of outstanding scholarship. As a publicist for the Creel Committee during World War I, he underscored the rule that propaganda and truth must not be separated. At Minnesota as "chief of staff" under presidents Vincent and Coffman, and later as president in his own right, he helped to raise his school to a first-rank university, to attract to it many of America's finest scholars and teachers, and to alter its curriculum to keep pace with a changing world. His was the administrative hand which welded the famed Mayo Clinic to the university. It was Ford who took the lead in promoting the university press, who shaped the charters of the general and university colleges, and who elevated the graduate school to eminence. Beyond the university lie his successes as editor of *Compton's Encyclopedia* and the *American Historical Review*. His services to the Guggenheim, Carnegie and Laura Spelman Rockefeller Foundations, to the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, span three decades of effort to provide fine scholars with better educational facilities.

To talk of his life is to talk, in modern day parlance, of administration. "I never looked on administration as anything but a service to scholarship—a job of holding up the hands of the prophets. Administration meant to me the establishing of a center of scholarship where research and teaching went on more effectively because of what I did."

But there was more to Ford's administration than this. James Gray called him a "fisher of men." Never an intellectual delver into the foibles of human behavior, Ford has always enjoyed an armchair psychologist's interest in "sizing people up." He has a sixth sense for potentiality. He could ascertain quickly that here was just the man to fill a research function in one department or a teaching post in another. Stored in the back of his mind were long lists of men whom he knew someday he would want to call to Minnesota or recommend to searching administrators from other schools.

Ford understands perfectly that he has a remarkable talent for moderating differences of opinion, not merely achieving an acceptable expedient. The tools of his trade are his ability to speak impromptu, to find the *mot juste*, and to approach the weightiest matter with amiable good humor. There is no malice within him to barb his ready wit. The "fairness and kindliness" of his judgments once noted by Andrew D. White have repeatedly made reason prevail where discord had ruled. Where his warm, humane disinterest could bring more impassioned minds to focus upon an issue, his lack of prejudice provided over and over a beacon of believability around which agreement could be reached. "I shall repeat many times," he says, "that my idea of an administrator is a man who breaks the path for teachers and scholars, who makes it possible for them to do more, and who shoulders the responsibilities, making the decisions that they can waste so much time on and then not really decide."

He pauses to reflect, knocking the ashes from his pipe. "I would have to confess that I have looked at many men and wondered why they didn't grow up. They were not mature. I hope I am. Their evaluation of the importance of something trivial or evanescent, getting excited about it, getting personal about it, was something that I just didn't share. It looked like a way of wasting your time and shortening your life and dividing your energies to do these things and to get excited about them. People would come to you with something that was *terribly important.* Well, gradually you'd have to get them down to seeing that it wasn't such a world-shattering experience as they had imagined." The hand comes up again in the familiar gesture and he laughs—gentle, kindly laughter. The sound is good, and one begins to see the man, the scholar, the wit, the believer. One also begins to see the man with a dream.

"I have a boyhood memory," he muses, "of the hired man in my grandfather's home who went west and promised that when he came back he would give my brother and me a pony. Years went by and we cherished that dream—and he never came back and we never got the pony. But that doesn't have any bearing on anything in the world."

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..... The Scholar's Scratch Pad .....

A Digression on Great Moments

HARLOW SHAPLEY

Cosmic energy, in the form of sunshine and the earth's leaking body heat, in co-operation with the organic compounds of the primeval "soup" in the earth's primitive shallow seas, led long ago to the slow evolution of green leaves and stems and the eventual development of the higher plants and animals. The early and continuing biochemical reaction of photosynthesis was paramount in this co-operation. Here we simply point to the beginning of the collaboration of radiant energy and organic molecules as a decisive step in the life episode on the terrestrial surface. It was the start of Operation Chlorophyll, without which we would not be. So far as life is concerned, it was indeed one of the Great Moments of the universe; and if it could happen here it could happen elsewhere, with perhaps equally momentous consequences (or trivial consequences, if life be rated lowly).

The idea of a particular Great Moment, a critical turning point in the manifold evolution of the material universe, is an intriguing one. We have college courses on Great Ideas, reading lists of Great Books, and books on Great Men. There are Great Expectations, High Lights of the Year, and so on. Why not look for the Great Epochs in Cosmography?

Before the primitive plants really got under way, the earth's rocky crust was essentially barren biologically, as the moon is now; and then began photosynthesis, a process for which we should always be grateful. What are some other equally revolutionary episodes? For the most part they may be too hidden for us to detect, since we are considerably impotent and ignorant in the face of nature's complexities. But some of them are discernible.

Different choosers of epochal events would probably make different choices. I suggest the following:

1. The explosion of the all-inclusive primeval atom, if there was one—a violence that according to current hypotheses resulted successively in the expanding universe, the birth of the heavy chemical atoms, the formation of galaxies and stars, and the origin of planets. Some of the planets, those with moist and rocky surfaces, were suited to the emergence of varied organisms, among them those that speculate on Great Moments.

2. The fortunate "co-operation of charm and countercharm," as an ancient Chinese saying puts it, that permitted natural laws to provide for the existence of the cohesive atomic nucleus. This concept is a rather difficult one and takes a bit of grasping. I am reminded that a famous physicist who explores the nature of atomic nuclei once confided that it is only by a narrow squeak that matter exists at all. But perhaps this ubiquitous nuclear coherence does not in-

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✪ Past president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, author of many works on astronomy, recipient of numerous awards and medals, and a member of the Editorial Board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, HARLOW SHAPLEY was director of the Harvard Observatory from 1921 to 1952.

This article is from Dr. Shapley's book, *Cosmic Facts and the Human Response*, to be published in August of this year by Harper and Brothers.

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volve the one-directional passage of time and should be listed with momentous facts rather than with factual moments.

3. The lightning strokes, or other natural energy bursts, which helped to synthesize out of the preprimeval atmosphere of the earth (and comparable planets where methane and ammonia, water vapor and hydrogen prevailed) the amino acids which underlie the proteins which underlie organisms. This means, in other words, nature's synthesis of the first continuing life—or at least the vital first step toward the origin, on the earth or elsewhere, of "material organizations perpetuating their organization."

4. The afore-mentioned invention or "accident" of photosynthesis, including its becoming a biological habit. This complicated device brought life's energy down from the sun.

5. The issuance from the shallow waters of seashore, lake and river of primitive animals which learned to take their oxygen raw—an occurrence of some 400 million years ago for this planet, perhaps much later for many others. Some of these primitives which crawled or flopped ashore were the forerunners of insects; some were the ancestral frogs and other early amphibians. Below the surface of the water the primitive plants and animals got their oxygen, which burns and builds, in diluted dosage. They found it captured by waves or ripples from the overlying air. On land the inhaling of concentrated oxygen was an early accomplishment of major moment.

A specialized breathing apparatus developed variously. For instance, we mammals long ago abandoned our ancestral gills and developed in their place a bellows arrangement (lungs) equipped with strings (vocal chords) which permit conversation and song, in addition to the traffic in oxygen and carbon dioxide. A happy by-product of the development of an efficient apparatus for inhaling needed oxygen and exhaling undesired carbon dioxide was the production of this ingenious vocal means of communication. For the transfer of information to each other it made us not dependent, as are the ants, on the twiddling of antennae, or dependent, as are the bees, on the waggling of our abdomens.

6. The "invention," that is, the rapid mutational development, of insect wings. These appendages, which have made the mighty class of Insecta so dominant (a million kinds, a trillion individuals) and in many ways so important in the life of the planet, did not arise through the slow adaptation of existing appendages to a new use. The wings of flying mammals (bats) and of flying neo-reptiles (the birds) were developed through an adaptation of the forelegs. But insect wings were acquired without the sacrifice of standard appendages; they were something entirely extra, serving in part as an escape mechanism. The survival of many orders of insects since the Paleozoic era was doubtless successful because of their overcoming some of the precariousness of life on the ground where they could not easily escape their devourers by running, crawling or hiding. Those primitive insects which could take to the air on occasion—long before there were birds to exploit the art of traveling in a gaseous medium—those early-winged insects met one important test for the survival of the species: they got away! Their escape mechanism was indeed novel and well designed.

We could list additional momentous items, such as the descent of our ancestral Hominidae from the trees, the discovery of the use of fire, the announcement of the laws of motion and of gravitation. But some of them may be too local to be considered as Great Moments for the universe. Most of those numbered above are obviously gradual changes, not sudden unique inventions. In fact it might be better to use the word *epoch* or *era* rather than *moment.*

Incidentally, if partial comprehension and description of the cosmos is in itself a part of cosmography and an important item in the whole cosmic scheme, then the big mutations in the primate cortex are master moments, as was the discovery of the wheel, the calculus and the subconscious.

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So . . . . . .

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

The spread of American culture ("cocacolaization" the French call it) proceeds apace in the land where they used to order these things better. A returned traveler tells me that a hole-in-the-wall adjoining the Cafè de la Paix advertises "Le Hot Dog Supreme," and that in revue-theaters the strip-teaser is all the rage. One who has been elaborately photographed for an American magazine impersonates a *jeune fille* exuberantly divesting herself while goggle-eyed over the pages of a large volume labeled *Marquis de Sade.*

On the other hand, a French court has recently imposed a stiff fine upon the publisher of this same "divine Marquis," unmoved by the patriotic, anti-cocacolaization plea of the defense that an American detective story is more corrupting. Whether this means that American "puritanism" also is conquering Gaul or is simply another illustration of the fact that the prosecution of famous books has been more frequent in French history than those who hold her up as an example of wise tolerance like to admit, I don't know. An American edition of translated selections from Sade was published here four years ago without, I think, troubling the police, and it was prefaced by an ardent defense of the author from the pen of that unassailable intellectual Simone de Beauvoir who quoted Baudelaire as well as Guillaume Appollinaire's rousing opinion that Sade was "the freest man who ever lived." That he passed a major portion of his adult life in penal institutions and insane asylums is hardly relevant to the kind of freedom Appollinaire was referring to. Stone walls do not a prison make.

What really interests me in all this has to do with the proper place of that "realization of the reality of evil" which seems at the present moment to be occupying both theologians and critics of the arts. While several middle-brow magazines have been urging upon our novelists the businessman-as-hero and, in general, complaining that neither the virtue nor the happy situation of the modern American is being given adequate recognition, the high-brow organs keep urging a deeper and deeper exploration of misery and wickedness.

The general line usually taken is not quite that of the old-fashioned satirist who stressed his duty to "lash the vices of the age" nor that of the old-fashioned reformer who called for more light in dirty corners because, in the Ibsen phrase, "Evils grow in the dark." No, the current argument, like that of Mademoiselle de Beauvoir, is subtler and more existentialist—in the Kierkegaardian as well as the Sartian version. What we need, it insists, is an adequate Sense of Sin; something to correct that false optimism which began with Rousseauistic notions about natural goodness and perfectibility and which, watered down, now persists in the doctrine that men are never criminal nor wicked but only "maladjusted" or "wrongly conditioned."

Now I am a reality-of-evil man myself. I believe that men (and that includes me) are frequently wicked, not merely "maladjusted." I agree that a good deal of contemporary political and social as well as moral thinking is wrong because it refuses to face this fact. But there are two reasons why I do not join too enthusiastically in the call for more darkness, violence, despair and sadism in contemporary art.

One reason is simply that there is an awful lot of it already and no reader of contemporary fiction, poetry or drama is likely to get the impression that men and women always behave nicely. No doubt one way of calling attention to the reality of beauty and the reality of goodness is to give a true picture of the ugly and the evil. And you can

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get this argument from a source as austere as Paul Tillich, who set it forth in an article on modern religious art in which he collaborated with Theodore Green. Defending those religious pictures which are full of "violence and anguish, anxiety and despair," the article goes on to say that "their very violence is an implicit affirmation of all the values which are being threatened and violated in these tragic times."

Once again I agree. But when we have so little except this affirmation by contrast, I wonder if it is sensible to call for more and more. Can we know the good and the beautiful only through their opposites? Don't both modern writers and their readers by now have a sufficiently adequate conviction of the reality of evil? Since we know very well that men can be beasts, would it be a surrender to shallow optimism to suggest, occasionally, that they can also be something else? Moreover, I can't banish wholly the suspicion that some who profess to be demonstrating their devotion to kindliness and chastity by copying Baudelaire and Sade are pulling our legs—and perhaps even their own. Rasputin's doctrine of Salvation through Sinning is very seductive.

The other reason that I have my reservations concerning the current doctrine is related to the first: How far, I wonder, should the artist accept the notion that he is the product rather than, in part at least, the maker of his times? Does he, as the Marxists are fond of saying, merely "reflect" an age? Or does he play a part in making it what it is? Alfred Kazin, for instance, writes: "There is sickness in contemporary literature, a very great sickness; but it is hardly self-willed, and it is bound up with the situation of contemporary humanity." Isn't the despair of our literature also and in itself a part of "the situation of contemporary humanity"? Could literature itself do something to ameliorate it? Lewis Mumford has written: "If our civilization is not to produce greater holocausts, our writers will have to become something more than merely mirrors of its violence and disintegration." And with that I am inclined to agree. When Mumford goes on to say, "They, through their own efforts, will have to regain the initiative for the human person and the forces of life, chaining up the demons we have allowed to run loose, and releasing the angels and ministers of grace we have shamefacedly—and shamefully—incarcerated," I am afraid I lose courage and sneak away, murmuring as I go, "A large order!"

Whatever the proper answer to either of the two questions we have been asking, both of them pop up with increasing frequency in contemporary discussions. In a recent issue of the *Illustrated London News*, Sir John Squire (a good conservative) takes the authors of a new biography of Toulouse-Lautrec to task for their reluctance to admit that his "life of squalid debauch" and the subjects which it provided him are not an essential part of his genius. On the other hand, A. L. Chanin, writing in the *Nation*, takes the more usual contemporary position: "These brothel interiors and the portraits of inmates, are part and parcel of the nineteenth-century goal, of novelist and playwright as well as painter, to oppose artificiality and hypocrisy with a searching realism." The pretense in the eighteen-nineties that subject matter is irrelevant strikes me as less unconvincing. Was Toulouse-Lautrec being a moralist, either with or without knowing it, or does the attractiveness of his work prove that, on the contrary, he found vice a creature of far from hideous mien?

Partly to illustrate how frequently contemporary critics find themselves concerned with the problem, let's quote once more, this time from Kenneth Rexroth (surely no middle-brow apologist for things as they are) who has this to say apropos Cocteau's *Journals*—again in the *Nation*: "A certain clever Neo-Catholic dodge was fashionable on the café terraces. . . . It went like this: He sinned. Therefore he believed in sin. Therefore he believed in the Devil. Therefore he believed in God. Therefore he believed in Catholicism. Claudel made quite a thing of this with Rimbaud. Using a similar routine, T. S. Eliot was able to convince the less bright undergraduates back in his native corn belt that Baudelaire wrote like Racine and 'believed' like Bossuet. This has led in our day to imbecilities like 'Sade (or Genet) belongs to us!' . . . Oh, come off it."

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I was up before six this morning, and one of the first things I did was to turn on the radio for the weather forecast. That reminded me of two things: first, of a posthumous tut-tut of disapproval from Dr. Johnson who thought concern about the weather a finicky pretense on the part of over-coddled men; second, of the fact that the very presence of a radio is evidence of a broken promise to myself. When I first settled in what my friends call "way out there in Tucson," I said I would have no radio, no telephone and no daily paper.

Of these renunciations the last will seem to most people the most obviously indefensible, but I had what are for me sound reasons. When I wanted to put them in their most irritating form I used to say, "I don't take a paper because I'm afraid there might be something important I'd rather not know about." Or sometimes: "Nothing is likely to happen that I would need to know sooner than I can get the news in one of the weeklies I read in far less time than it would take me to read seven daily papers. If, for instance, the Russians had captured New York and were coming this way, I'd like to be warned before they got here. But it would take them at least a week."

Though intended *épater le bourgeoisie*, the second of these formulations isn't so very far from the truth. A daily paper is read by most people not so much because there is any good reason why they should know so promptly what is in it, as because they have a gossip's interest in news merely as news or are suffering from a neurotic anxiety which makes them eager to hear the worst from day to day.

The argument against broadcasts is the same, only a fortiori. During the war, "Every hour on the hour" was nerve-racking nonsense. Even in our world things don't happen that frequently. And it is by the appeal to our neuroses that the radio newscasters thrive. With few exceptions they use even their tone of voice to make everything seem important, portentous and, usually, ominous. The newspaper invented the scare headline, the broadcasters the art of putting everything in vocal headlines six inches high. There is an exclamation point after nearly every sentence, and behind every item crouches a crisis. Yet, most Americans pipe this artificial hysteria into their living rooms several times a day, and they are so far from being the better for it that what they call "keeping up with world affairs" is one of the reasons why repose, contemplation and quiet happiness (as well as anything worthy to be called thinking) seem to be becoming rarer and rarer.

For the fact that we now have a telephone I blame my wife, but the daily paper is still, after five years, absent, and I rarely turn on the radio for anything except the weather report. This morning I was a few seconds early, and I heard that the East and the West had found a new point of disagreement. I don't deny that this fact may possibly be some day more important to me than the bright, warm day the weather bureau promised. But whether I hear about the failure of some pow-wow of the statesmen this morning or next week makes far less difference to me than if I didn't know now what the meteorological prospects are. Besides, I would rather live the seasons day by day and do my worrying about the world situation at weekly intervals—and all in one lump.

For reasons unexplained, a certain advertising agency has me on the mailing list for its house organ, and thus keeps me up-to-date on the latest skullduggeries. The current issue startled me with a paragraph which begins with the admission that some of the special "days" and "weeks" are just plain silly. However, it went on, some others are to be admired as well as taken seriously. To which class do you suppose "Brand Names Week" and the "Spring Festival of Gas Ranges" belong? Right! They are "soundly staged and heavily promoted on the national level." Not just "nationally," you understand, but "on the national level." Probably they also promote "consumer-acceptance" and are therefore advantageous "profit-wise." But it is hard for me to understand the psyche of a man who will buy a gas range because he has been told it is the month in which to do so.

Addressing the American Association of

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Advertisers, a Yale professor expressed this opinion: "As we shift from a society in which production is the focus of economic attention to one which is oriented to consumption, as we see a new pattern of personality emerging in American life, it seems to me that advertising as an institution moves into a position of influence comparable at least to a degree to such other major institutions for the formation of values as the school and the church."

This gives us, among other things, "a preview" of what the English we write is likely to be. Approximately two out of three of the words used contribute nothing and, without changing even the nature of the vocabulary, the statement could be shortened to read: "As consumption becomes more important to our society, advertising will affect our lives as much as the school or the church." Rephrasing to make the statement say what it really means would give us something like this: "In a society where we make more than we can use, it is as important to persuade people to buy superfluities as to familiarize them with the best that has been thought and said."

Thrifty Lover

DAVID MORTON

Look where the candid sun
And the unsubtle sea
Stare each on each in shining nakedness;
These two long since have done
With loving thriftily
Where less is more and more is surely less.

Wherefore, that love may thrive,
I'll not undress my love
For the soon satiate eye, but gaze, instead,
Where drape and dream contrive
No more than is enough
For hunger that shall be too thinly fed.

✪ DAVID MORTON, formerly professor of English at Amherst College, is now living in the Azores, where he continues to write and teach. His book, *Like a Man in Love*, was awarded a Borestone Mountain Poetry Award in 1955.

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..... The Revolving Bookstand .....

Beginning with this issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *"The Revolving Bookstand" will feature one essay-review covering a collection of books, replacing our regular reviews of single books. Robert Langbaum of the department of English, Cornell University, initiates this new series and will appear again in the Winter issue. Loren Eiseley, chairman of the department of anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania, will write for the Autumn and Spring issues. Thereafter, other contributors will be invited, each for a single number.*

—EDITOR

Crime In Modern Literature

ROBERT LANGBAUM

In the history of literature, as in history generally, the revolution of one generation becomes the orthodoxy of succeeding generations; and the truths which men of genius painfully draw from experience become easy platitudes for their second- and third-rate followers. I say this in answer to Edmund Fuller's telling attack in the last issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR on what he calls "The New Compassion in the American Novel"—the "new compassion," that is, for criminal and antisocial as against respectable, law-abiding characters. Although compassion for wrongdoers is at least as old as Christianity, the "new compassion"—the compassion involving judgment not only of the criminal but also of the law he is breaking—goes back to the beginnings of romanticism. It goes back to Goethe's Faust who, with the approval of God, makes a pact with the Devil in order to taste all experience. It goes back to Dostoevsky, whom Mr. Fuller uses as a stick with which to beat such contemporary American novelists as James Jones, Paul Bowles and Charles Jackson. Mr. Fuller is right in attacking the merely mechanical exploitation of an inherited literary theme. He is wrong, however, in seeing in what are simply inferior novels "the absolute end product of ethical relativism"—for this seems to imply an attack on the theme itself.

Unlike our contemporary novelists, Dostoevsky "was not," says Mr. Fuller, "neutral in the conflict between good and evil." True. But Dostoevsky does not speak with Mr. Fuller's certainty about the distinction between good and evil. His novels show the saint and sinner bound together by a moral intensity which distinguishes them from other people. Mr. Fuller understands that "all of us are involved in the guilt of mankind. . . . But you have to have a standard of values," he says, "in order to see how corrupt, warped, misdirected values destroy themselves and others." True again. But where do you find the standard of values on which we can all agree? That is the central and distinguishing question of the modern literary movement from the eighteenth century to our own day. The question is how to find values in a world where tradition has been rejected, where we cannot accept values on faith. In other words, how far can we carry the freedom to which modern man is committed? At what point must the free man place limits on his own freedom?

✪ Assistant professor of English at Cornell University, ROBERT LANGBAUM has written on political and literary subjects for THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and other periodicals. He is the author of *The Poetry of Experience*; the American edition will appear in July.

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The question opens the way to a kind of moral experimentalism. And this is where the criminal, the satanic hero, "The Outsider"—to borrow the title of Colin Wilson's relevant but careless study of the criminal among other Outsiders in literature (Houghton Mifflin, $4.00)—plays his part. Whatever the truth about actual criminals, the criminal as a literary figure is significant because he seems to carry to the extreme at least one side of human nature, and in so doing he carries his own moral freedom to that verge where individual self-realization comes into conflict with society. The criminal is on one side, therefore, a good test case as respectable people are not. The artist and the saint are also test cases on the other side, and modern literature is always trying to show that the two sides have more in common with each other than either has with respectable people. That is because respectable people, it is implied or stated in much of this literature, have not carried any human potentiality to an extreme and have therefore not taken advantage of their moral freedom. *Respectability*—in the sense at least in which the word figures in modern literature—is not a state you choose. It is the state you find yourself in when you have stopped short of moral choice.

Not only in literature but also in the sensational stories on the front pages of newspapers, the criminal becomes a mythological figure who, like the tragic hero of old, acts out for us the unrealized potentialities of our own nature and raises, in the punishment he takes upon himself, the questions about guilt and innocence which in our own lives most of us contrive never to face. The mythology of crime may as a matter of fact be the only really compelling mythology left us. Although a comparable mythology has in modern times evolved around the artist, the mythology of the artist has not a comparable appeal to all classes of men. Readers and writers of all classes, high-brow, low-brow and middle-brow, are attracted to crime stories. The difference in the quality of the stories depends on how far the writer can go in connecting the criminal with the rest of us and even—if the writer has intellect and imagination enough—with a whole world-view: a world-view which, whether it be original or orthodox, must be discovered or rediscovered through the facts of the case. Thus crime stories range from novels of automatic violence which excite without illuminating—novels Mr. Fuller quite rightly deplores—to a novel like Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* which shows the vilest crime as a transaction of love in which victim, aggressor, policeman and society all need each other to fulfill the Christian ritual of sin and redemption.

The case for the modern interest in crime is beautifully made in Albert Camus' latest novel, *The Fall* (translated by Justin O'Brien, Knopf, $3.00), which in itself offers a wry comment on that interest. Camus' hero is a highly successful Parisian lawyer who makes a specialty of defending, often without a fee, criminals who are fundamentally justified, "noble murderers" as he calls them. He is, in other words, the very model of enlightened respectability, of the kind of reader who finds edification in reading crime stories and understanding the criminal's side of the case. But then this hero comes to realize that he is himself a criminal whose aggressive weapon is his morality. He has used the guilt of others to establish, without any risk to himself, his own innocence, his own Eden, as he puts it. He has arranged for himself a moral invulnerability that protects him from involvement with the rest of humanity and enables him to experience the highest pleasure of all, the enjoyment of one's own nature.

The man's doubts begin one night when, full of self-satisfaction, he hears laughter floating down the Seine, laughter he feels to be directed against himself. From that time on he hears laughter everywhere, always, he feels, directed against himself. Finally, again at night, he sees a woman drown herself in the Seine, and he is ambiguously unable or unwilling to rescue her. The incident or lack of incident dramatizes for him the crimes of omission he has been committing all his life. His awareness of guilt constitutes his Fall which, like Adam's, is paradoxically fortunate in that it initiates him into the moral life, the

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knowledge of good and evil. Crime has for Camus' hero the same significance that it has for those of us who—lacking, as Camus says, "the energy of evil as well as the energy of good"—read crime stories to learn something about our own untested nature.

Camus' hero gives up his practice in Paris and goes to Amsterdam, where we find him as the novel opens in a tough waterfront bar, the hangout for scum from all over the world. He is telling his story to a Frenchman, a Parisian, of his class and education, also involved in the law; in short, the counterpart of himself and like himself distinctly out of place in that bar. Now our hero has taken to defending the downright criminals who hang out in the bar, criminals whose motives are as bad as their deeds. He does this to make sure justice does not work perfectly. "If pimps and thieves were invariably sentenced, all decent people would get to thinking they themselves were constantly innocent, *cher monsieur.*"

Why Amsterdam? Because Amsterdam, partly reclaimed from the sea itself, is the edge of Europe, the place where civilization meets primeval chaos, where Europe reaches out in romantic longing for the East, a longing which fulfills itself as imperialistic domination. Amsterdam is the city of waters; and water is the original reality, not only biologically but morally—there are the waters of baptism and of hell. "Have you noticed that Amsterdam's concentric canals resemble the circles of hell? The middle-class hell"—the antehell, we realize by later references, of those souls in Dante who were neither for God nor against Him and were therefore not worthy to get into hell itself. Clearly the author has done everything he could to universalize his crime story. Yet it cannot be said that the symbolism, nor for that matter the novel itself, quite comes alive dramatically. We hardly notice this, however, for the book has plenty of life—the life of a first-rate mind engaged in passionate thought.

The book is a dramatic monologue and therefore reminiscent of Browning, who likewise used the form to investigate morality's many cunning passages. Taking Browning as model, we find in Camus' book all the elements of a great dramatic monologue. Characteristic, for example, is the speaker's repudiation of his own utterance. He reveals in the end that he hasn't after all changed, that his latest moral posture, the confession of common guilt, gives him an even more devastating advantage over others. "We are in the soup together. However, I have a superiority in that I know it." Also characteristic is the moral autonomy whereby the speaker judges and punishes himself. He reveals in the end that he has consented to harbor a stolen Van Eyck, "The Just Judges," in the hope that one of the people to whom he tells his story will turn out to be a policeman who, by arresting him for the theft he did not commit, will enable him to expiate the crimes he has committed, crimes which do not fall within the provisions of the law. His present auditor, then, is:

> Not a policeman; that would be too easy. What? Ah, I suspected as much, you see. That strange affection I felt for you had sense to it then. In Paris you practice the noble profession of lawyer! I sensed that we were of the same species. Are we not all alike, constantly talking and to no one, forever up against the same questions although we know the answers in advance? Then please tell me what happened to you one night on the quays of the Seine and how you managed never to risk your life.

The utterance accomplishes nothing. The speaker is brought face to face in the end with that counterpart of himself which he must find in every auditor, that counterpart to whom he speaks in order to learn something about himself, to hear again his own story and self-judgment. As in all dramatic monologues, there is no reversal, no way out through external events or judgment, and therefore no answer, no meaning in the logical sense. There is only the logic of character carried to its ultimate conclusion. "Logic is easy," M. Camus says elsewhere, "almost impossible is logic to the bitter end." Logic to the bitter end leads to that dead end where all dramatic monologues arrive. But beyond logic is art. And Browning, in his best dramatic monologues, breaks through the impasse by of-

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fering us life itself, the reality and vitality of the speaker. Camus, too, wants us to admire in the end the speaker's bitter bravery. He offers us, however, an undelineated consciousness from which there emerges no character to believe in. This makes Browning an Existentialist in effect and Camus, at least in this book, an Existentialist in theory only. But then Camus goes to a farther verge than Browning; he looks into nothingness as Browning does only once (in *Childe Roland*)—and from that bourn few authors manage to bring their heroes back alive.

"The French," says Lytton Strachey in the brilliant *Virginia Woolf & Lytton Strachey Letters* (edited by Leonard Woolf and James Strachey; Harcourt, Brace; $4.50) "the French seem to me a melancholy race—is it because they have no imagination, so that they have no outlets when they find themselves (as all intelligent people must) *vis-à-vis* with the horrors of the world? There's a sort of dry desperation about some of them which I don't believe exists with the English—even with Swift." The remark—significant coming from Strachey who was enamored of the French mind and did everything he could to import its qualities into English literature—applies beautifully to Camus and the French Existentialists with their "logic to the bitter end."

In spite of Strachey's remark, however, it is the clear, dry vision he and Virginia Woolf have in mind when they reject over and over in these letters a hypocrisy and sentimentality which they identify as Victorian—"the Victorian horror" they call it. Envisioning the literature of the future, "*At last,*" says Strachey, "it'll tell the truth, and be indecent, and amusing, and romantic"; and Virginia Woolf says, "The danger lies in becoming too kind." We see what she means when, after a cruel account of the literary pretensions of a self-educated clerk and the peculiarities of a theosophist couple (types that sentimentalists, whether Victorian or contemporary, would treat as lovable eccentrics), she cries out in pain:

> Why is it that human beings are so terribly pathetic? . . . But can you explain the human race at all—I mean those queer fragments of it which are so terribly like ourselves, and so like Chimpanzees at the same time, and so lofty and high minded, with their little shelves of classics and clean china and nice check curtains and purity that I can't see why it's all wrong.

The cry of pain shows that genuine reverence for the mystery of human existence which can emerge only after the very worst has been taken into account.

Was it in pursuit of such knowledge that James Yaffe and Meyer Levin made novels this year out of one of the most gruesome crimes on record, the Leopold-Loeb murder case of 1924—the case of two brilliant and wealthy University of Chicago students who kidnapped and murdered a little boy, and then tried to collect ransom, for no apparent motive except to get a thrill and to apply a pseudo-Nietzschean theory about the rights of "supermen"? It would be difficult to ascribe the pursuit of knowledge or any other intent to Mr. Yaffe who, in *Nothing but the Night* (Atlantic-Little, Brown, $3.95), renders his story less significant and even less sensational than the case itself—he changes the murderers from university to prep school students, omitting their philosophical rationalizations and turning their overt into latent homosexuality. Mr. Levin, on the other hand, in *Compulsion* (Simon and Schuster, $5.00), does everything he can to give his story the widest possible significance. A fellow student of the murderers, and the reporter who wrote the story largely responsible for their apprehension, Levin has, we are told, been pondering the meaning of the case for the last thirty years. By introducing himself into the novel as Sid Silver, the reporter, who is in many ways a counterpart of the murderers (Sid is also a prodigy who graduates from the University at eighteen, also Jewish and a member of their circle, sharing many of their ideas; one of the murderers, Judd Steiner, falls in love with Sid's girl)—Levin introduces the point of view by which to show the connection between the criminals and the rest of us.

"Judd Steiner, someone like myself," Sid

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thinks. "If we were in so many ways alike, surely I would come to understand him. And yet he had done that most incomprehensible, that most horrible murder." In the world of this novel where no one is religious, where everyone with brains is a scientific materialist and determinist and the fashionable chatter is about free love and free experience, Judd sees in the murder an opportunity "to test the farthest human experience, dispassionately, as in a laboratory," and says, as he pours hydrochloric acid over the dead boy's body, "I hereby baptize and consecrate nothing to nothing." Are the two murderers, Judd and Artie, carrying the ideas of the age to a bitterly logical conclusion? We soon see that their ideas are attempts to explain to themselves psychological motives they themselves do not understand. We learn that the boys suffered traumas in childhood, that they are emotionally arrested, and that the crime is for both a compulsive ritual and hence apparently motiveless.

The motiveless crime is the kind that interests modern writers because it suggests, first of all, that man has a soul, that he does not merely respond automatically to material needs; and then it forces us to look so deeply into human motivation as to uncover compulsions which seem to be of the soul itself—compulsions which raise again the question that goes back to Greek tragedy, the question about the mysteriously inextricable connection between fate and free will. Levin manages to maintain the general significance of the crime by suggesting that the ideas of the age are, like the ideas of the murderers, symptoms of a psychological deficiency, that the age itself suffered a trauma in the war, that "we are," as Artie's girl says, "the generation that refused to grow up." Sid, in trying to understand why this crime "seized the public imagination as a crime beyond other crimes," suggests that "this crime had meanings that would project far into our time." The author even connects the crime with the start of Capone's rule in Chicago and the abortive Hitler putsch in Munich; but here, it must be admitted, his intention outstrips the success of his execution.

He does very well, however, in portraying the frenzied inquisitiveness, part sexual, part moral, which attends the case and gives it the religious significance—the significance of a ritual sacrifice—which crime really has when it is treated seriously in modern literature. In the passionate mob that swarms around the courthouse the morning the sentence is to be delivered, every person carries "the hidden sense that the disposition would symbolically apply to his own darkest impulse. *If I let myself do something even as awful as this, how much would I be punished? Would I die for it?*"

In a foreword Mr. Levin tells us that in using for his story an actual crime which seems to epitomize the thinking of an era, he is following in the great tradition of Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. The comparison with Dreiser is the most appropriate because Levin does not, like Stendhal and Dostoevsky, see further than his age; like Dreiser, he uses the ideas of his age to explain an apparently inexplicable crime. I should say that Levin's ideas are almost up-to-date, for the reader who knows his Freud is likely to be several jumps ahead of the novel and to find certain of the stunning psychological revelations anticlimatic.

Compulsion is, as it were, the *American Tragedy* of the 1950's in that it adds to Dreiser's physical and sociological determinism a psychological determinism which plumbs such mysterious depths in human nature as to raise doubts about determinism itself. The change of intellectual climate is dramatized in the figure of the defense attorney, the famous old determinist, Jonathan Wilk (Clarence Darrow in the actual case). Wilk tries to save the boys from hanging by pleading that, though they are legally *sane*, their psychological abnormality is a mitigating condition. But Wilk does not dare go so far as to say what he really means, that "no one was responsible for any crime." Wilk's philosophy is not, as the prosecuting attorney points out, distinguishable from Judd's. Yet Wilk does not like Judd and Artie; for he has spent

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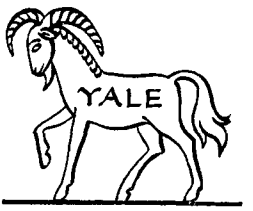

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his life defending victims of economic and social conditions, and these two rich boys are victims in a new sense. Wilk pleads that if Judd and Artie had been from impoverished homes, the court would agree that there were mitigating conditions and act accordingly. That is the particular refinement of the law which Wilk (and Dreiser) had fought for. Now Wilk (and Levin) is fighting for a refinement of the crude legal line between *sanity* and *insanity*, for a recognition by the law that so-called sane people do not always know what they are doing or why. The final enigma is posed when the judge, an intelligent man, decides that since the plea of psychological abnormality applies to all criminals and raises the whole question of human responsibility and legal punishment, the reason he will save the boys from hanging is their youth.

The enigma raises all the ultimate questions about the commensurability of free will and fate, guilt and retribution—questions which used to be raised in tragedy where the committer of violence is a god or king, a maker of the law, and which in modern times have been raised in plays and novels where the committer of violence is a criminal, a breaker of the law. The fall of a god or king reinforces the moral order by showing that even the greatest must succumb to it. But the fall of the criminal is not remarkable; what is remarkable is our sympathy for him—a sympathy which causes us to question the moral order itself. Tragedy—which belongs to a world where the moral order is regarded as fixed—shows how the greatest individual becomes even greater at the point where he succumbs to the moral order. At its best, the crime story—which belongs to a world where the moral order is regarded as evolving—shows how the most lawless individual breaks through the order of his society only to discover a new morality or rediscover an old one.

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Brief Comments

ALEXANDER HAMILTON IN THE AMERICAN TRADITION. By Louis M. Hacker. *McGraw-Hill. $4.75.*

ALEXANDER HAMILTON AND THE FOUNDING OF THE NATION. Edited by Richard B. Morris. *Dial. $7.50.*

These volumes from Columbia University scholars are peculiarly appropriate during Hamilton's bicentennial. For that institution, like King's College, gave Hamilton most of his formal training (1773-1776), and he served Columbia College as trustee and in collateral ways. Through the years Columbia men have added to our knowledge of him—his sons John C. and James A., and later Professors Nevins, Dorfman, Tugwell and others. Professor Harold C. Syrett is now editing a definitive collection of Hamilton's papers, and the Gino Speranza Lectures this year are devoted to a review of Hamilton's career and influence.

The present books complement each other. Dean Hacker's is depiction and appraisal, while Professor Morris' consists of discerning selections from Hamilton's writings, presented with a knowledgeable general introduction and briefer prefatory remarks throughout.

The enduring qualities of Hamilton are all here—his zeal in the Revolution, his agency in the construction and adoption of the Constitution, his powerful part in erection of the nation, and his solicitude for its continuing progress. Nor is the man lost in the movements of his time, for both author and editor have contrived to preserve personal characteristics as they played upon public events. Dependable scholarship has gone to sources; myths are shunned, but interpretations are rightly offered.

Dean Hacker makes Hamilton more the apostle of individualism and less the employer of governmental promotion and guidance in the economy than this reviewer thinks accurate. Hamilton honored the pre-

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cepts of Adam Smith in the breach; he was rather a national economic planner than a truster to the hidden hand of private interest to accomplish the public benefit. Hamilton belongs, in fact, not so much in the conservative as in the liberal tradition; he, more than Jefferson, was forebear of the New Deal.

Professor Morris' point that Hamilton was too unbending for success as a political leader has contradictions. One thinks of his concessions in the Old Congress, his acceptance of revision of his call of the Annapolis Convention at the behest of Randolph, his conciliatory behavior at the end of the Constitutional Convention, and his *Federalist* papers and efforts at Poughkeepsie to recommend a document which fell short of his ideal. At the last he sacrificed his party for the good of his state and country. Further, Professor Morris' suggestion that Hamilton should have agreed to some sort of discrimination between original and subsequent holders of the public debt seems out of harmony with his own admission that such would have been "impractical in operation." Free transfer of the debt was essential to the whole funding operation.

BROADUS MITCHELL

RACE AND NATIONALITY IN AMERICAN LIFE. By Oscar Handlin. *Little, Brown. $4.00.*

Professor Oscar Handlin of Harvard has performed a noteworthy function in setting forth the origins of social prejudices in the United States, in describing the circumstances leading to remarkable improvement in this field, and in discussing the potentialities for benefit to the nation as a result of the erosion of racial and religious prejudices. To be sure, the author does not claim that the battles are all behind us, but his discussion of the specific improvements realized in the past twenty years offers solid hope that the day may not be too distant when racial and religious prejudices are reduced to so insignificant a level as no longer to constitute a problem of national concern. This view may be somewhat overoptimistic, but the fact that real and substantial progress has been made deserves to be noted.

Perhaps the most notable contribution made by the book is the extensive and penetrating analysis and complete demolition of the "national origins" formula frozen into our immigration laws in the years of World War I. This unfortunate formula has been attacked by many of us in the Congress for years. Hopefully Professor Handlin's exhaustive analysis and critique, detailing the fallacies, deceptions and errors of the Dillingham Report upon which the "national origins" concept was based, will strengthen our hand in seeking the repeal of this odious formula.

Race and Nationality in American Life is a valuable addition to our literature in the fields of racial relations and immigration in the United States.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

THE CRISIS OF THE OLD ORDER, 1919-1933. The Age of Roosevelt. Volume I. By Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *Houghton Mifflin. $6.00.*

The opening volume of this long-awaited biography of Franklin Roosevelt ends at the threshold of his Presidency. Two roads are developed to Inauguaration Day of 1933. The first is a brilliant and compactly written description of certain twentieth-century political and intellectual movements in the United States. The second is a biography of Roosevelt before he became President, emphasizing predictions of his future greatness and verging on hagiography.

The two roads converge in the Depression. In 1930 we were told that economic improvement was imminent and governmental action unnecessary. By 1932 business and political leaders apathetically confronted catastrophe, for the most part without any program for aid or reconstruction. President Hoover's panacea was to balance the budget, raise tariffs and cease government interference with business. Many Democratic leaders (and this is a forgotten episode) shared these views. For example, Raskob, the Democratic National Chairman, thought the most important issue of

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OF BOOKS AND WRITING

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This study by Sister Quinn cannot fail to throw new light upon modern poets and the poetic process itself.

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1932 was to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment.

In this atmosphere of inertia and fear, respectable voices proclaimed the breakdown of the American system. Immediately subsequent to March 4, 1933, the continuing vitality of representative government was to be demonstrated. For like Polk, Lincoln and Truman, Franklin Roosevelt was to demonstrate courage and creative leadership in the Presidency which had not been foreshadowed in his prior career.

Nations, like individuals, tend to repress unpleasant memories. Professor Schlesinger writes history with a novelist's verve. He has performed a valuable public service in summarizing the chronicle of the Great Depression and re-creating the atmosphere of national *rigor mortis* which Roosevelt confronted and overcame.

ASHER LANS

THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM. By Theodore Draper. *Viking. $6.75.*

This first volume of a projected history of the American Communist movement is an impressive accomplishment in research. The work, begun by the author in 1952, has been since 1955 a part of the Study of Communist Influence in American Life sponsored by the Fund for the Republic.

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The thoroughness and objectivity of this study make it required reading for all who are interested in the present Communist party of the United States, and lead this reviewer to look forward with pleasure to the forthcoming volumes of the series.

DAVID L. MARKS

THE SOVIET SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. By John N. Hazard. *University of Chicago. $4.00.*

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Of Mr. Hazard's various considerations, the ones concerning the growth of the Soviet intelligentsia and its persistent demand for free expression, the expansion of the military in political affairs, and the development of a managerial and technical class pressing for recognition in policy making and the selection of leaders, stand out as the most significant. They are to be studied and appraised by students of Soviet affairs, for their future development may alter the very foundation of the Soviet society as created by Lenin and Stalin.

Although Mr. Hazard, being primarily a jurist, did not deal with the theoretical framework, whether Marxian or Russian, within which the Soviet institutions were developed, his interpretation of the legal and administrative aspects of the Soviet government should remain an important contribution to this field.

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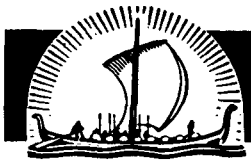

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THE ANATOMY OF SOUTH AFRICAN MISERY. By C. W. de Kiewiet. *Oxford University. $1.75.*

This small book, made up of the three lectures presented by Dr. de Kiewiet in the initiation of the Whidden Lectures at McMaster University, is a valuable primer for understanding present-day South Africa as well as the large and diffuse body of literature concerning it.

Dr. de Kiewiet does not dwell on detailed reports of the misery or the reasons why the racial policies of South Africa have become a leading issue in international relations. He gives his full attention to an analysis of the misery itself—how the seeds were sown for it in the nineteenth century, the mold set in the nationalism and authoritarianism growing out of and solidified by the Boer War, the components and rationalization of *apartheid* which contribute to it, and the reasons why such misery can only be perpetuated under the attitudes and policies advocated by the government of South Africa.

Dr. de Kiewiet believes that a hasty attempt to resolve the political, social and economic problems of South Africa, whether the impetus comes from "American senators who clamor for a premature political freedom when there are no foundations, or Indian nationalists who denounce all Western influence as vicious colonialism," can only lead to chaos. And the treachery of the misery can never be fully understood until it is seen as a whole, until one examines closely the ugly picture posed by smug American and British critics, proud and arrogant Afrikaners, hostile and angry black men.

BETSY SAUNDERS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF VALUE. By De Witt H. Parker. *University of Michigan. $5.00.*

In his previous work, *Human Values*, Professor Parker stated his theme, of which the present volume is a reiteration with some variations: A value or good is "the satisfaction of any interest in any object." Morality is viewed as a series of interactions between demands and responses, in which value is equated with the realizing of a life plan, the expression of the "matrix self." It is noteworthy that the emphasis is on *process*, on achieving rather than on achievement.

Moreover, intrinsic values reside in experiences, not in objects; man is, as Protagoras saw him, the measure of all things. Parker is an unabashed relativist whose essential approach to existence is aesthetic rather than ethical. The subjectivism of *chacun à son goût* is reflected in his extreme reluctance to admit to any objectivity of value for fear of giving it ontological status. It is here that he falls victim to the errors of the cultural relativists: expediency and lack of knowledge are confused with the good, and transcultural moral judgments become taboo.

Granting that value is a function of a situation, may not there be contexts where death and taxes are not the only absolutes? Must we concur with Parker in assessing cruelty as a good where the moral standard permits it? Is evil necessarily to be confined to the frustration of desire or interest?

There are contradictions in this book by a thinker who in his meticulous avoidance of any sort of categorical imperative sometimes unduly widened the gulf between heart and head. But his motive was unqualifiedly laudable: the freedom of the person.

RICHARD HUETT

DOMINANT THEMES OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY: A History. By George Boas. *Ronald. $6.75.*

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philosophy. The chapter on "Les Philosophes," for example, gives a delightful exposition of Bayle's views on King David, and we find that Collier, an obscure member of the English clergy, independently arrived at Berkeley's view of the nonexistence of an external world. The Scottish School of Common Sense is shown to be an important alternative to Kant's answer to Hume's critique of causality. Few discussions of modern philosophy have dealt so ably with the trends in French philosophy. Twentieth-century philosophers, however, are not given adequate consideration.

The social and biographic background for philosophic ideas is largely omitted in favor of an exposition of the ideas themselves. It is sometimes difficult to trace the relation of ideas of important philosophers to those of their successors. At times the reader must wonder why the problem of knowledge was so often formulated in a way that made its solution impossible. Nevertheless, the careful reader will be able to understand for himself the many currents of Western philosophy.

WILLIAM W. HOLLISTER

ASPECTS OF CULTURE. By Harry L. Shapiro. *Rutgers University.* $2.75.

Like the three fateful sisters, culture spins our past, present and future, says Dr. Shapiro. This idea can be both startling and helpful, for an awareness of our enveloping culture, unseen and taken for granted, may prepare us to face the recent ominous increase in cultural complexity.

In the wake of the early navigators, Europeans spread over the world and encountered with bewilderment and contempt many odd breeds of people and strange systems of behavior. Confronted with such deviations, scholars attempted to classify and describe cultural and organic man according to systems devised by the naturalists and then, as anthropology developed, compare findings and seek universals. As this search continued, group behavior was found to fall into patterns that each conforming individual learned; that is, culture is learned behavior. An understanding of how foreigners behave and why they perpetuate bizarre customs became more essential as empire builders sought to exploit rather than destroy native cultures. Colonialism declined, and such considerations as economic participation and technical assistance overseas became elements in the successful pursuit of foreign political and economic policy. Tolerance of cultural diversity is the preliminary essential to such operations.

Dr. Shapiro discusses the historians' neglect in reporting on the impact of alien cultures as part of national competition, and examines the rise and fall of civilization according to Toynbee, finding civilization less doomed to die than we thought. He has sufficient stature and authority in his field to move forward surely without footnotes or other hesitations and to make good reading.

SYDNEY CONNOR

SYMBOLS OF TRANSFORMATION. By C. G. Jung. Translated by R. F. C. Hull. Bollingen Series XX. *Pantheon.* $5.00.

This is the new Bollingen edition of Jung's most influential volume, *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido,* known to American and English readers for forty years as *Psychology of the Unconscious.* It constitutes the fifth volume of his collected works, and embodies considerable rewriting by Jung, a new translation by R. F. C. Hull, expert handling of bibliography, index, footnotes and illustrations. In clarity, scholarship and skill of presentation the book represents a great advance over the Hinkle edition of 1916. The many inaccuracies in the excerpts from Miss Miller's fantasies, which I spent some time tracking down for this edition, and the great need for the complete text, which I pointed out to the Bollingen editors, led to the first English translation included here as an appendix.

This most widely known of Jung's books has a special appeal to Americans interested in psychoanalysis. It was written in 1911, when Jung was acutely conscious of the loss of friendly relations with Freud, and marks the place where the two men separated. His subject was Miss Frank Miller of New

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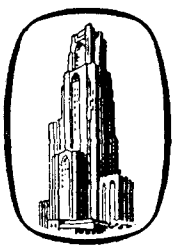

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York, whose remarks on Indian and Aztec lore illuminate Jung's concept of myth and symbol, and he spends forty pages discussing Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. He analyzes Miss Miller's fantasies to show mythology as a key to the development of mind and emotion and to reveal the secret of the individual as common to all men. In his comparison of one myth with another, the sequence of similarities sometimes leads to a confusion of particulars instead of the higher coherence of history at which he is aiming.

ALBERT FOWLER

SIX WINGS: Men of Science in the Renaissance. By George Sarton. Illustrated. *Indiana University*. *$6.75*.

This scholarly and fascinating book, published a year after the author's death, was written by a humanist who as a historian of science believed that the history of science was and is an essential part of the spiritual history of mankind. He suggests that scientific work needs to be criticized from the technical angle but that we need more than that: "Saints strive for goodness and justness, artists search for beauty, and men of science for truth. How do they do it? And why? How do their efforts combine and help one another? How do the branches of science hold together? These are the questions—human questions, not technical ones—which we are trying to answer." This book is one man's answer.

The Renaissance is the author's brief way of referring "to the period from about 1450 to about 1600 in western Europe, or, to replace dates by deeds, from the western discovery of printing to the death of Giordano Bruno." A reviewer trying to hold this notice to brevity is tormented by the vistas of life opened by this book in its discussion of the varied intermingled elements in the scientist's search for truth in a time which saw the spread of the civilizing printed word not in the Latin but in the "vernaculars of the peoples," hand in hand with trials of heresy and man's inhumanities to man in the name of Christ.

This is the kind of imaginative interpretation for which one would wish to write and thank the author. But it is too late for that.

FREDERICK M. FEIKER

THE DARWIN READER. Selected and edited by Marston Bates and Philip S. Humphrey. *Scribner's*. *$6.75*.

Two years hence will fall the centennial of a strangely decisive event in human history, the publication of *The Origin of Species*. Who, in 1859, could have guessed that a smallish book, written by an amateur naturalist who had once thought of being a parson, would radically reshape man's intellectual life forever?

This *Reader* is a happy anticipation of the coming celebration. Here, in the cream of his voluminous writings, Darwin stands out as the supreme naturalist, and as a writer, too, of charming simplicity and endless fascination. Wisely, the editors have avoided mere fragments in favor of the lengthy pieces of Darwin's best and most enduring writing.

Even the unscientific will be drawn to the matchless *Autobiography* and the immortal *Voyage of the Beagle*. Only Darwin could have made the earthworm an exciting protagonist for a whole book, as he did in *The Formation of Vegetable Mould*. *The Expression of the Emotions* reveals his subtlety of observation, *Insectivorous Plants*, the vast fertility of his power of experiment with simple means.

The main meat is in the extensive passages from *The Origin* and from *The Descent of Man*. Here is the crux of "Darwinism." And here I find one fault. To put the lay reader on his guard, this anthology needs a compact critical analysis, pro and con, of Darwinism, original and modern, lest he accept the generally incredible mechanist scheme of evolution as the final word.

WARD SHEPARD

THE GREAT CHAIN OF LIFE. By Joseph Wood Krutch. *Houghton Mifflin*. *$3.75*.

Few indeed are the modern writers of natural history who either write well or think philosophically about their subject. Joseph Wood Krutch is an exception on

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both counts, and *The Great Chain of Life* turns out to be a gently iconoclastic account of the natural world as seen by an intellectual. Using well-known animals as examples, he probes expertly into their complexities and points out aspects of life that are almost always ignored in conventional biology textbooks.

Darwinism, says Krutch, leaves a lot to be explained. In particular he questions the widely accepted belief of the behaviorists, geneticists and mechanists that natural selection is the only factor which has influenced evolution. To believe this, according to Krutch, is to recognize only negative evidence and to omit (or avoid) an understanding of the development of the higher animal characteristics that distinguish so definitely the animate from the inanimate and the "higher" animal from the "lower." Men are more like animals than gods, but this does not mean they are beastly.

It is invigorating to survey the animal world under Krutch's guidance. He has sympathy, hope and emotion. His lack of arrogance is a far cry from the cocksure pronouncements of biology students about laboratory rats. Krutch will never be accepted as a "disciplined" or "proper" scientist—indeed, he has no pretensions to that status—but his imaginative insight into the world of nature gives him the right to be listened to carefully.

GORDON CUYLER

SCIENCE AND IMAGINATION. By Marjorie Nicolson. *Cornell University. $1.75.*

The raw material of science is fed to us through all of the five senses, but it is the eyes that really have it. Twice during the seventeenth century our powers of vision were granted what must have seemed like miraculous extension.

First came the telescope, at the end of a generation in which two novae had already aroused new interest in the heavens, and when creative imagination, confronting squarely the paradoxes of classic and Christian tradition, was ready for a sail into the cosmos. Soon after came the microscope—if not the first, at least the first of indubitable record—"more easily used [than the telescope] by the amateur" and opening up a "world of minutiae . . . more readily comprehensible."

Miss Nicolson's six essays (one done with the physicist Nora Mohler) deal mainly with the impact of these inventions upon literature, the exponents of science being unfortunately somewhat taciturn about matters of the imagination. We learn that fiction and satire, the latter ranging from delicate and perceptive wit to scurrilous abuse, have long been by-products of the advance of science. But so, we see, have been the spatial magnificence of Milton and our slow-growing awareness of order, law and organization from the farthest reaches of the universe to its least components.

To be reminded of these things in a book that combines rich scholarship with good writing and vivid interest is a privilege that I for one intend to pass on to students. Their response should be a clue to the state of their education.

PAUL B. SEARS

THE LION AND THE THRONE: The Life and Times of Sir Edward Coke. By Catherine Drinker Bowen. *Atlantic-Little, Brown. $6.00.*

"At the commencement of my historical studies," wrote Henry C. Lea, "I speedily became convinced that the surest basis of investigation for a given period lay in an examination of its jurisprudence, which presents without disguise its aspirations and the means regarded as best adopted for their realization." This is an injunction which Catherine Drinker Bowen has taken to heart. Moreover, she has humanized it by altering the word *jurisprudence* to *jurisconsults*, and has now rounded out her ambitious study of the roots of American democracy, which began with *Yankee from Olympus* and *John Adams and the American Revolution*, with a scholarly but nevertheless lively account of the life and times of Sir Edward Coke, England's greatest man of law.

Beginning with Coke's election, at the age of forty-one, as Speaker of the Commons, she pursues his tempestuous history

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which included appointment as Attorney General, the post of Chief Justice of Common Pleas, and the position of Lord Chief Justice of England, through his dismissal, a tangle of parliamentary squabbles, imprisonment, and ultimate death in 1634.

Here is a splendid portrayal of the man, and a subtle presentation of his achievements and their ultimate effect, through Coke's defenses of free speech and parliamentary privilege, upon the development of our own free government. But Mrs. Bowen has succeeded in a more difficult task: the evocation of the society which produced Coke, the violent, poetic, bloody and intriguing world of the turn of the sixteenth century.

JAY WILLIAMS

JUSTICE OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES: The Shaping Years, 1841-1870. By Mark DeWolfe Howe. *Harvard University. $5.00.*

This first volume of Howe's biography of Justice Holmes is "an essay in intellectual history," for it offers a study in the shaping of the mind of America's foremost legal figure. Holmes emerges from his diary, letters and published papers, and from the comments of his contemporaries, as an exceedingly gifted young man with a penchant for philosophical contemplation.

Lawyer, legal secretary to the Justice, and editor of the three famous collections of Holmes's letters, Howe is exceptionally well-qualified to re-create the first twenty-nine years of the Justice's life. His account of Holmes's Civil War duty with the "Twentieth Massachusetts" stands out as a remarkable history of the war and, more important, as a description of the crucible in which Holmes changed from a youth to a man.

The chapters covering Holmes's childhood and days at Harvard lack the depth of the Civil War sections, for the coverage of the personal and family life of the young Holmes is somewhat meager. Despite the biographer's skill in bringing together available contemporary material, Holmes the public figure emerges rather than Holmes the man. Although this is regrettable, it represents the wishes of the Jus-

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This first appearance in English of Mounier's major work contains his philosophy of Personalism. Woven into the overall pattern of the work, along with Mounier's belief in man's ability to choose and to act, is the thought of Jung, Adler, Nietzsche, Bergson, Kierkegaard, and many others.

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tice who, in his desire for personal privacy, destroyed a great many of his papers. Happily, he did not destroy many poems and pages of descriptive prose which appear and lend lightness and enjoyment to this book.

The latter part of the biography is strong and is perhaps the most meaningful section of the portrait. In it, Howe attempts to trace the growth of Holmes's convictions and philosophy of law—traits which later distinguished him as judge and Justice and as the "Great Dissenter."

The Shaping Years should leave its readers impatient for the forthcoming volumes.

STEPHEN POLLAK

THE PAPERS OF CHRISTIAN GAUSS. Edited by Katherine Gauss Jackson and Hiram Haydn. *Random House. $6.00.*

Mark Van Doren said, in effect, that the only adequate commentary on *Hamlet* was *Hamlet*; "nothing shorter will do." With extraordinary discrimination and loving care the editors of these *Papers* have, so to say, put in the hand of Dean Gauss the pencil with which he has drawn his own portrait. Not a stroke is superfluous; nothing shorter will do.

The arrangement is roughly chronological: "Origins," an autobiographical fragment; "Europe," notes during three trips; "Teacher, Scholar, and Dean," including some diary entries, a few lectures and notes for speeches; "These United States," two essays which reveal his "impatience with Bohemianism"; "Correspondence" with F. Scott Fitzgerald and Edmund Wilson; and "Retirement." Throughout, it is the man we knew.

To the casual observer, in his later years at least, Christian Gauss looked grim or burdened with all the sorrows of this world. But in a moment came the smile of friendship or affection, the gleam of kindly wit, the pause of quiet consideration, or the flash of generous indignation. He had seen our earth swallowed up in the galaxies and proud man reduced to less than the quintessence of dust. But it did not lead him to despair. In the thirties he wrote in an "Epilogue to an Unwritten Book" what twenty years later would still have been his confession of faith: "After our generation is gone and theirs too has followed, when our tasks are ended and we shall all lie with a little earth and much sky above us, if men still live and struggle, may they have learned from their bitterness and our failures, and through our groping and disappointments may they have found truer truths and finer loyalties which will shine above them and us like a firmament of stars."

Everyone who knew Dean Gauss—and no doubt countless others—will read these papers with a smile on the lips and a bit of moisture in the eyes. They are a justification—by example—of his faith in the destiny of man.

WILLIAM T. HASTINGS

THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM BLAKE. Edited by Geoffrey Keynes. Illustrated. *Macmillan. $10.00.*

This magnificently printed and edited volume is the first edition of Blake's letters since 1906. It will be definitive for a long time, for Sir Geoffrey Keynes has made every effort to discover all existing Blake letters not previously published. To these he has added several interesting documents pertaining to Blake's life and some letters written to Blake. The text is well and sensibly annotated, and the volume includes a register of all the documents.

The surviving letters are not numerous enough to present Blake's life with any degree of fullness. There are too many gaps in the story, and we learn little about many of the major events and activities. But the volume presents us with several perspectives of Blake's mind, and this in the long run is of far greater value. In several important letters Blake eloquently expresses his ideas about art and the nature of his poetic vision. In others we hear enough about his monetary transactions and his work as an engraver to picture him as a man trying to make his way professionally.

The last letter in the volume is not from Blake, but from George Richmond to Samuel Palmer. It describes Blake's death: "He said he was going to that Country he had

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all his life wished to see & expressed Himself Happy." Blake's letters show him to us in *this* country, but not so attached to it that he could not see it true.

HAZARD ADAMS

A SWINGER OF BIRCHES: A Portrait of Robert Frost. By Sidney Cox. *New York University.* $3.75.

While many poets have given us clues to their work in essays, some of them highly systematic, Robert Frost's prose is fugitive, tentative and rare. His theories of poetry, his general observations on life and letters, are recounted mainly in conversations, occasionally in letters addressed to friends. This portrait, therefore, which is made up of quotations and paraphrases of conversations extending over nearly forty-five years, sketches many of the convictions and general ideas that stand behind the poems of Robert Frost.

The portrait deliberately tells us little about Mr. Frost's private or public life, and it comments only obliquely and allusively on poems from *A Boy's Will* to the present. Several of its short chapters are little more than brief surveys of some opinions, and a larger biographical or critical structure might have organized the portrait more expressively. But the late Professor Cox set out to render the important features of his friend's mind as he admiringly knew it, and certainly some of its features come clear, particularly its tough playfulness and playful toughness. Mr. Frost, for all his profoundly American character—and perhaps even because of it—is not easy to understand. In its best portions, this record of one friend's efforts to understand him is a clarifying extension of the voice of the poems. Mr. Frost has shyly contributed a prose introduction which implies a good deal about his reticence and his withholding of himself from literary criticism and controversy.

G. ARMOUR CRAIG

GUSTAV ADOLF. By August Strindberg. Translation and introduction by Walter Johnson. *University of Washington.* $4.00.

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called *Gustav Adolf,* his longest, most ambitious historical drama.

In his splendid introduction, Professor Johnson brings perspective to this heroic drama, pointing out that it is a "study play," not a "stage play." To perform it would take at least seven hours, but the translator's suggested cuts for an acting version might well tempt drama departments of universities whose students are of Scandinavian background.

Professor Johnson's translation is lean and suggests that it is close to the original style. For in Strindberg's best passages, which were to influence such American dramatists as O'Neill, Hellman and Arthur Miller, he has a succinctness that is decidedly contemporary.

The epic stature of the play arose from the Swedish dramatist's frank obsession with this seventeenth-century leader. He finds in Gustav an inner resolve which turned a proud, unthinking man into a contemplative spirit who has discovered tolerance. There is true growth of character as the scenes develop. Of sixty-odd subordinate characters, a score are clearly, understandingly drawn.

The American-Scandinavian Foundation, in sponsoring Professor Johnson's Strindberg series (which has included *Queen Christina, Charles XII* and *Gustav III*), performs an admirable service in these dramatic histories, for in them the anguished playwright is drawn from the white heat of his own present into an assured viewpoint of a living past. It is ironic that when revivalists turn to Strindberg they choose his contemporary dramas, their problems dated, and neglect his histories, their lessons timeless.

RICHARD L. COE

MR. ARCULARIS: A Play. By Conrad Aiken. *Harvard University. $2.75.*

Conrad Aiken has proved many times over his mastery in poetry, fiction and criticism. Allen Tate, thinking of this range, has called him "one of the few genuine *men of letters* left in our world today." Now, when it seemed too much to hope for a further extension of his virtuosity—as if Picasso, say, should turn architect—he has turned playwright. The result is an original, unsettling, beautiful piece of theater —original in that it is Aiken's own, though he has borrowed from himself.

The short story "Mr. Arcularis," now widely anthologized, tells of a convalescent from a heart operation who takes an ocean voyage, sleepwalks his way to a coffin, and —back on the operating table—dies. It all turns out to have been an ether dream. This is a trick, but with searching and chilling resonances, for what Mr. Arcularis is groping for is himself, his guilt, his buried past. In the moment of death comes, to him alone, final knowledge.

A difficult story out of which to make a play, it needed, for one thing, same tangible "past" for Mr. Arcularis. This Aiken supplies by interpolating an episode from his novel *Great Circle.* For the rest, the play objectifies uncannily what seemed in the story to be too inward for exposure. Add to this a command of quiet, ironic, controlled prose, a sure sense of timing and suspense, and you have a play that is as right on its terms as the story was on its.

Now Aiken is a dramatist too, and a distinguished one.

RUFUS A. BLANSHARD

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF KATHLEEN RAINE. *Random House. $3.50.*

Here ranged in order are the four books of Kathleen Raine, a profuse, creative flowering in a short span of time (*Stone and Flower* appeared in 1943; *The Year One* in 1952) from the early exquisite beginnings to the magnificent group in the third book, *The Pythoness,* in which her full potential was first realized, and beyond. This volume of precious import will go down with the other memorables, the unkillables, of English poetry, for these poems lead on and on, as her sea shells do:

They sleep on the ocean floor like humming-tops
Whose music is the mother-of-pearl octave of the rainbow,
Harmonious shells that whisper for ever in our ears,

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"The world that you inhabit has not yet been created."

It is not easy to bring into existence apprehensions such as hers, but from the beginning she has not ceased from strife:

tongue slivered into thongs of leather
rain stones inserted in my breasts,
head severed,

if only the lips may speak,
if only the god will come.

And she has come through, gloriously. This little "Invocation" is on Page 5; on Page 69 behold:

The bird of god descends between two moments
Like silence into music, opening a way through time.

Read, for instance, "Isis Wanderer" and "Dust" and those given to the preoccupation that in the word is ultimate creation, speaking for all wordless life. The intensity of her emotion, her passion and tenderness for life, are so great that if the world had never been created, poems like these would bring it up into the sight.

Statement of mystery, how shall we name
A spirit clothed in world, a world made man?

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

OTHER KNOWLEDGE: Poems New and Selected. By Lenore G. Marshall. *Noonday.* *$3.00.*

A sharply individual personality underlies these poems, the second collection of a poet-also-novelist who consistently with one medium supplements the other. There is an energy of mind which, however, does not discount body, and an almost breathlessness in transmitting the undiminished thought. When for a moment she turns that thought upon herself, we already know the fierce integrity, but applaud her statement of it in "Though I Am False":

still my eyes
Haunted must seek for their eventual mark,
Uncomforted close on final compromise.

Only an unperceived hard residue,
Bright core, strict ghost, hard indissoluble pact,
Beyond corruption will remain intact.

With flexible skill she goes from the lyricism of

Now the soft laconic snow
Fills the hollow where it lies

to the swift historical tone, taking the part for the whole, of

While buffalo were shot by great shots, hundreds in a day
Groaning monumentally over our expanding country.

But perhaps her more typical mode lies in the terse "Biological Thoughts on Life After Death," or the more extended "Rumor," ending:

Not in the steep height gained or the lowest hollow
Nor what will ever be seen;
Not a new earth and not new men, but a splendid rumor
Is the light that poets follow.

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

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The Reader Replies .....

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington 9, D. C. Because of limitations of space, we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*

—EDITOR

I would like at this time to thank you for the both solid and stimulating materials presented in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. The article, "Trade and Aid," by Gunnar Myrdal in the Spring issue was particularly welcome to those of us who are engaging in the college debates of the current year on the question of foreign aid. His views are like a fresh breeze amid all the welter of stale and outworn pronouncements coming from the Congressional debates.

JOSEPH D. MARINO, JR.
Bozeman, Montana

* * *

No doubt your mail will be heavy with compliments for Edmund Fuller's article, "The New Compassion in the American Novel" [AS: Spring, 1957]. Mr. Fuller's attitude supports one held by many for some weary years. Some of us have expressed ourselves in conversation, and there may be many others who have agreed but who have been so caught in the business of doing (and reading) what the crowd does that they have not complained, thinking that they alone are weary with so much "realism."

Mr. Fuller has so rightly stated that the writing of the Naturalists was a cry for justice. I read *Studs Lonigan,* for instance, not for pleasure, but because it seemed first-rate *reporting* about a way of life I had never seen. But after the reports have been made, after we have considered human misery and gone on to philosophy and the humanities and given thought to "How did he (or she) get that way?" and then tried to change our attitudes enough to give these "lost" citizens more opportunity to live better lives, why must we constantly be told about the "crazy mixed-up ones" as though *they* were the *majority* and the most *important* citizens?

Isn't it time we developed some intelligent writers who (without being Pollyannas or Victorian or Puritan) could tell of a few almost normal human beings who live good, wholesome lives while meeting the daily problems of this age with *responsibility* and a sense of balance, good taste and good humor? Isn't it time we announced that the rapist, "genial" or not, the slasher, "jovial" or not, the dope pusher, "fun-loving" or not, are still tramps, bums and misfits who are undesirable and not worthy of being heroes? Certainly we can show true *compassion* for these people who sadly choose to waste their opportunities and buckle under because they will not grow up and assume responsibility for their own lives, but not *admiration.*

Perhaps some brilliant young (or middle-aged) writer will begin to study and follow Jung instead of Freud, acknowledging that we *all* had childhoods, happy, unhappy, secure and insecure; we all had parents, good, bad and indifferent; we all had our fears, small, medium, large and sometimes enormous; we all met injustices. But somewhere along the road—after we are thirty years old (if not *before*) and most certainly by forty—we one day looked in the mirror and said, "Well, old kid, what can be salvaged here?" By this time we have lived enough, read, seen and heard enough of whining that we realize that everyone has a past. Now we can either stand upon that past and get on with living, or we can

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whine and blame somebody or something for our failures.

We seem to be in an era of confessions which sound like psychiatrists' notes, even outdoing the fictional trash. We used to think of this as washing our dirty linen in public. But now that we have automatic washers and driers, there seems to be an urge to let them stand idle while some folk move out to the gutter at the public curb and dabble their soiled linen in the water flowing by. Perhaps as long as curious citizens will stand and observe the mess—and pay admission—this washing will go on. However, writers of intelligent good taste must let these onlookers—as well as the dirty-linen washers—know that they are doing just that and deserve no praise for being stupid.

All thanks to Mr. Fuller for saying *so well* what should be said in all the mass publications also. And many thanks to you for publishing something that needs repeating until it replaces even a tiresome commercial currently boring us—"You'll wonder where the yellow went!" I for one plan to keep looking for cleaner linen and better literature.

WILMA BUCKNER HUNT
Elberon, New Jersey

* * *

It is rather surprising that a distinguished author like Edmund Fuller can dispose of writers like James Jones in as flippant a manner as he does in his article "The New Compassion in the American Novel." Mr. Fuller may or may not be right in his understanding of the word *compassion*, but his dismissal of *From Here to Eternity* as strictly "sentimental" and without social meaning is certainly an oversimplification, almost a distortion of Jones's brilliant work. When I read that novel I had just been discharged from the United States Army and I was struck by the extreme accuracy, the overwhelming and, at times, even embarrassing realism of the book. Prewitt and his buddies were exactly like many of the men I had known—their lives just as torn and empty and devoid of meaning.

But what is the novelist's treatment of these people, and what should it be? Mr. Fuller apparently feels that the writer should take it upon himself to examine the circumstances of social or personal cause and effect that put these men where they are. Then he should tell us what measures should be taken to alleviate the conditions. He must be a social pathologist and outline a program of reform, or better still, a preacher and preach us a sermon on how evil these characters are and how we should all be good and respectable. I would like to take issue with the view that the novelist is required to do more than tell us a story against (if he desires) a social background, using realistic characters. If the characters he wishes to portray are the "incorrigible antisocial and criminal types and whores," as Mr. Fuller phrases it, it is his incontestable right to portray them. There is more to life than the "respectable," law-abiding (at least on the surface) American middle-class that Mr. Fuller implies is the proper group from which to draw characters.

The essential fact overlooked by the latter gentleman, in my opinion, is this: the drinking, the fighting, the defiance of authority and all the other symbols of immorality that he so righteously attacks, are often mere façades or outer appearances masking a genuine, sensitive human being inside. A man can be just as loyal to his friends, just as warm and sincere, just as compassionate whether he hangs out in bars or in opera houses. It is the heart that counts. Shallowness and deceit are always with us, and it is not just the people who display outward hostility toward the world who are antisocial. But whether or not we call a man antisocial depends, in many situations, on our own individual values. Personally, I can name many people in public life today whom I regard as more antisocial than the Prewitts and the Maggios. Should I then condemn every writer who fails to preach a sermon on how some of our more illustrious citizens are acting in defiance of common decency, and failing to live up to the just standard of fair play, and so on? Criticize I may, but the writer may not see things the way I do. Who is to say which view is right? Mr. Ful-

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ler apparently has some "distinct standard of values" to go on. I wish he would share it with us.

EDWARD J. JAY
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

* * *

Is it not possible that the inversion of values in modern American novels as described so well by Edmund Fuller is something more than a reflection of the moral relativism of our time?

To be more specific, the choice for the bum, the wino, the pervert and the prostitute is a definite choice, not a simple relativism. It is a choice in favor of the primitive as against the civilized, and as such, it would seem to be a survival of Romanticism.

Steinbeck and Algren and Jones are really proponents of a kind of "noble savage" theory. Of course scientific anthropology long ago killed off the original idea as it is found in narratives of savage life from the eighteenth century or in the writings of Rousseau. But the belief has by no means died that what most of us mean by civilization—commerce, industry, manners, custom, the arts (but not the folk arts)—is evil, and that those who are not affected by civilization or who are rebels have a virtue known only before the Fall. The characters for whom these modern authors show "compassion" have all the qualities of savages; some of them, like Steinbeck's bums, don't even live in houses but in cast-off artifacts from the civilization they despise.

Naturally all of these authors are anti-intellectuals. For them, as for Rousseau, you can commit any crime you like so long as you have a "good heart," but the man who believes in reason, law and art is either evil or decadent.

Primitivism, so long as it is restricted to accounts of wise children and sage rustics, is a pleasing and comforting myth for our less critical hours. But when primitivism is carried out to its logical consequences as an ideational basis for literature or life, the results are the death of art and the death of all the achievements in knowledge, thought and ethics of which man may be justly proud.

ROBERT T. TAYLOR
Butte, Montana

* * *

The counter-Puritanism described by Edmund Fuller is not confined to the novelists he mentions or their reviewers. Many of the "bright young men" on our English faculties carry the same philosophical taint.

In more than one university classroom in America today, a lecture on the modern novel might go something like this: the setting (a bawdy house) is graced by wallpaper of a musty and decadent *green*; the heroine (a prostitute) has eyes distinguished by their *emerald* depths; and in a close reading of the text we discover that the hero is afflicted with a chronic chancre of this same significant tint. *Voilà*! Triple-level color symbolism! How many in the class read so superficially as to miss this display of artistic technique?

Properly chastened, the students take furious notes while the bright young instructor delivers himself of a lecture on the triple levels of meaning involved (which, of course, generates a discussion of the mythic significance of the number three) and on *green* as symbolic of both life and death. The whole performance is properly spiced by esoteric references to Freud, Frazer and the Koran.

Unfortunately, this high level of discourse is marred by a couple of students in the back of the room who express themselves as being uneasy with a work of art dealing entirely with pederasts, lesbians and dope addicts. They are gently reminded that such nonaesthetic preoccupations are unfortunate hangovers of their middle-class backgrounds, of which it would be well to divest themselves as soon as possible.

Having put in a good day's work as a missionary in the religion of art, our shiny young Ph.D. hurries home to work on a never-to-be-published novel of his own, the hero of which is always and invariably a homosexual.

ROBERT H. ZOELLNER
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Grand Forks, North Dakota

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* * *

Geoffrey Wagner's "The Decline of Book Reviewing" [AS: Winter, 1956-57] contains an assertion which is at the very least misleading. He writes: "Readers have seen . . . *Marjorie Morningstar* reviewed on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review* in a friendly notice by Maxwell Geismar, only to be followed by his sharp criticism of the same book in the pages of the *Nation*."

The *Times* review may perhaps have been excessively humane in its approach to saying that there is nothing to *Marjorie Morningstar*, but Geismar did definitely conclude that the book is bad. Furthermore, the Geismar article in the *Nation* was not a review of *Morningstar*; it was a rejoinder to the *Life-Time* aesthetic based on the need for positive-thinking American novels, Wouk being their exemplar.

It is just such misreading or misremembering of pages being dealt with (leaving aside the possibility of distortions for sake of a thesis) which devaluates current reviewing and criticism both. It certainly devaluates Geoffrey Wagner's piece.

ELIOT WAGNER
Bronx, New York

* * *

With the possible exception of Mr. Krutch's delightful column (all of which has waited so long to be so well said), I thought Ihab H. Hassan's "Egyptian Retrospect" the outstanding feature of the Winter issue. Recent events in the Middle East have emphasized the need of Americans—at all intellectual levels—to realize that there are whole nations of peoples whose attitudes it remains impossible to correlate intelligibly with our own, but whose opinions we now are being forced to consider as having real and demonstrable weight. Dr. Hassan's beautifully written contribution toward this end is very worthwhile reading indeed.

BERNARD E. SITTER
Cumberland, Maryland

* * *

Even though I am not a professional historian, but rather a student of history, I could not hold my peace regarding parts of "History and Historical Novels" by Jay Williams [AS: Winter, 1956-57].

Why should Mr. Williams have been so alarmed to learn that many historians at least question the utility of historical novels? According to Henry Johnson in *The Teaching of History*, "It would be easy to multiply quotations from historians in praise or dispraise of historical fiction."

Mr. Williams seemed amazed to find that historians differ in the interpretation of the same set of facts! Yet, in the last paragraph of his article he says, "it must be recognized that knowledge is founded upon the clash of opinions. . . ." If it is true that knowledge emerges from the crucible of conflicting opinions, why should such a point be made out of the fact that historians do disagree? It should be remembered that even though chroniclers of the past differ in the meaning of the same set of facts, they at least are agreed that the "set of facts" are *true*. The facts of historical fiction are rarely true and the interpretation even less so. This led the great von Ranke to say after having read the historical novel *Quentin Durward*, "I turned away from it and resolved to avoid all invention and imagination in my work and stick to the facts." It seems to me that since historical novels cannot or do not "stick to the facts," they lead to more misinformation and misconceptions than history books where there is at least some application of the canons of historical method to the raw materials.

On the other hand, the untrue inventions and imaginations of facts of historical novels are usually paraded among an uncritical, unsuspecting public as fact, and therein lies the historian's and the social studies teacher's suspicion of them. A public untrained in the laws of historical method, whereby facts are winnowed from fiction according to the degrees of probability, is the least prepared to separate fact from fiction in the historical novels.

Translating the Founding Fathers into demigods may be a requirement of politics but is certainly not the requirement or the practice of historians. Charles Beard, in his *Economic Interpretation of the Constitu-*

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tion, did not pay any attention to this so-called requirement. According to von Ranke, it is the requirement of historians to report the past as it actually was. The chief value of history, Mr. Williams, is not entertainment but that of making the world in which we live more intelligible.

It seems to me that if one wants to get close to what happened in the past, as far as it can be ascertained, he must bypass the historical novel. For my money, fact, even probability, is better than fiction any day—especially when fiction parades itself as fact on an unsuspecting public!

GEORGE SINKLER
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* * *

In "Mr. Riesman's Consumers" [AS: Winter, 1956-57], Robert Wheeler asks whether other-direction and consumption-orientation *necessarily* inhibit autonomy. He answers, by reference to the Continental court societies, that these are the very factors "essential for the maintenance of high standards of creativity." But Mr. Wheeler has overlooked a fundamental feature of industrial capitalism which would point toward the conclusion that the widespread other-direction and consumption-orientation of our day does inevitably impinge upon autonomy.

The crucial difference between the court societies and our own is that the unprecedented abundance of technological capitalism *depends upon and demands* continuous and rapid consumption. Consequently, those who exert influence use their directive powers to encourage consumption (even to the point of indoctrination), for that is the basis of their influence. By the use of modern communication devices and installment buying, high consumption has been successfully advanced and maintained throughout our society.

When quantitative consumption occupies this commanding position certain characteristics of consumables are inevitably given distorted importance. Thus, the inculcated "skilled connoisseurship" of such things as laundry detergent efficiency and cigarette length is consumption emphasis rather than genuinely distinctive taste.

Moreover, in a society so dependent upon quantitative consumption, cultural objects are subverted to the role of inducements for greater consumption. The art, literature and intellect employed in the mediums of influence, commercial design, advertising and recently the TV money quiz, are not end products of disciplined creativity but are merely means for expanding consumption. The effect of quantitative consumption is only most apparent in spiritual holidays, formal education and athletics. In reality, the tendency of all cultural phenomena is centripetence into the vortex of the market where, misshapen, they survive as valences of consumability.

Autonomy is bound to be restricted when individualism and creativity are thus strongly influenced by and often subject to the standards of consumption appeal. In the fine arts, the humanities, and increasingly in the physical sciences, there is constant pressure to put on the practical mind and create for the market—inevitably on its own terms. And it is an awesome truth that the creative, cultural temperament stagnates when it is dominated by the overriding purpose of buying and selling. The hope (and therein the struggle) is that the ingredients of autonomy, historically shielded from the standards of consumption appeal, will successfully withstand the desecrating effect of widespread consumption-proclivity.

LEON ARDZROONI
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